Hafa Adai!

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Knight appointed as *Tribune* publisher. **PAGE 2**

Police director claims conspiracy, false charges. **PAGE 5**

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OPINION METER

This week's poll:

Is the CNMI government doing enough to pursue corruption cases and other white-collar crimes on the islands?

Let your voice be heard! Go to www.saipantribune.com to cast your vote.

INSIDE

Severe Weather

Severe weather howled through much of the nation Sunday, producing damaging tornadoes in the South.

NATION...Page 15

Independent Kosovo

Revelers fired guns and set off fireworks over Kosovo after parliament proclaimed independence.

WORLD...Page 16

Biz Casual

Everyone thinks they know what the term "business casual" means, but some of us clearly could use a refresher course.

LIFE & STYLE...Page 19

Sadness may encourage more extravagance

By MARK JEWELL
AP BUSINESS WRITER

BOSTON (AP)—If you're sad and shopping, watch your wallet: A new study shows people's spending judgment goes out the window when they're down, especially if they're a bit self-absorbed.

Study participants who watched a sadness-inducing video clip offered to pay nearly four times as much money to buy a water bottle than a group that watched an emotionally neutral clip.

See SADNESS on Page 4

NMC Tinian and Rota could be restored if...

By RIANNE PANGELINAN-BROWN
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REPORTER

The Northern Marianas College would have to submit a proposal for change to the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges before restoring any classes or programs at the Tinian or Rota sites.

According to ACCJC president Dr. Barbara Beno, "The commission is aware of considerable pressure for the college to provide educational services on Tinian and Rota; however, it should be noted that the college will need to submit a Substantive Change Proposal prior to restoring any classes/programs at these two sites and this cannot be undertaken

See NMC on Page 4

HOT, HOT, HOT! JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Tinian Elementary School's My Wave Club cultural dancers wow the crowd with their local dance numbers during the Tinian Hot Pepper Festival, held Saturday at Tachogna Beach. ***See story and more pictures on Page 9.***

'Unlimited reprogramming power for governor shifts onus to Fitial'

By AGNES E. DONATO
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REPORTER

A lawmaker has opposed a proposal to grant the governor unlimited reprogramming power until a new budget has been passed.

Rep. Tina Sablan said that legislators would be avoiding their responsibility by simply giving the governor unlimited reprogramming authority.

Sablan

"It would certainly be easier to blame him [governor] if anything goes wrong, but I truly believe we would be shirking our own responsibility to be fiscally prudent and to provide oversight in the expenditure of public funds. Why not follow the guidelines for reprogramming that are provided in the Planning and Budgeting Act?" she asked.

Sablan noted that the Planning and Budgeting Act already gives the governor power to reprogram up to 25 percent of the budget of all operations and activities of the Executive Branch, including all of the critical services that fall under his jurisdiction.

See UNLIMITED on Page 4

Local

House bill seeks cap on QC benefits

A House bill has been introduced to cap the tax benefits granted to investors under the qualifying certificate program.

The measure, sponsored by Rep. Joseph Deleon Guerrero, would limit the tax incentives a company may receive to the amount of its investment.

According to Deleon Guerrero, the current lack of a benefits cap "allows certain businesses to obtain a windfall of tax benefits that was not intended for the qualifying certificate program."

"It is not in the best interest of the Commonwealth to allow businesses to receive tax benefits in excess of their investment amount under the [qualifying certificate] program," the lawmaker said.

To become law, the bill must be passed by the House of Representatives and the Senate, and signed by the governor.

According to a recent report by the Commonwealth Development, the QC program has attracted 11 companies, produced immediate benefits of $28.12 million from capital expenditures, and generated a total of $100.59 million in taxes, local purchases, utility payments, and other community contributions over the seven years the program has been in place.

The report did not indicate the amount of taxes that QC beneficiaries didn't have to pay under the program.

The QC program was established on Dec. 1, 2000 with the enactment of Public Law 12-32, or the Investment Act of 2000. Under the program, tax benefits are given to entice businesses to put up new investments in the CNMI or to assist existing investors in expanding their operations.

Of the 11 QCs issued, seven are active and four are inactive. The four inactive beneficiaries had either opted to move forward with its investments without the qualifying certificate; had changed management or ownership in late 2004 and the company chose not to request a transfer of its QC to the new owners and instead surrendered it.

A 12th applicant, Hyatt Regency Saipan, had opted to withdraw its application as it did not agree with certain conditions of the program. ***(Agnes E. Donato)***

DCCA wants lower power rates for its sports division

By RIANNE PANGELINAN-BROWN
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REPORTER

The Department of Community & Cultural Affairs is asking the 16th Legislature to exempt the Division of Sports and Recreation from power consumption rates or to give it affordable rates for power consumption.

Melvin L.O. Faisao, the department's deputy secretary, said the division is under "tremendous pressure" to meet strenuous daily sports activities at the Ada Gymnasium.

In a letter to the Legislature, Faisao said he is seeking the lawmakers' support to exempt the Division of Sports & Recreation from paying their share of the CUC rates or, alternatively, provide it a more affordable one.

DCCA is mandated by Section 208 of Executive Order 94-3 to "develop and administer programs to team and individuals sports, recreational activities, and physical fitness for youth and adults, including senior citizens and persons with mental or physical disabilities."

Also, as the department explores the Scouting and Youth Development Unit, Faisao said the workload per staff could be reduced by increasing the number of personnel, including the hiring of two Community Development Specialists.

"This request for additional FTE for the teaching of developmental, survival and leadership skills will ultimately precipitate good citizenship for our youth," said Faisao.

He said that, although it is incumbent for the Legislature to provide funding to essential departments such as the Department of Public Safety, the Department of Public Health and the Public School System, it is also critically necessary to take into consideration that remedial departments such as DCCA be accorded funding that will not disrupt the services for children and families whom DCCA provides service to."

2Marianas Cup 2008
Date: February 22nd to 24th, 2008
Where: Pacific Islands Club Saipan
Divisions: Men's Doubles
Women's Doubles
Entry: $60/team.
Teams give names by 2/21/08
Amt. of players: 75-100 participants
All levels of players
– pro to beginner
Prizes: 1st - Tickets to next year's event with accommodation + $(estimated $3,500)
2nd - $ + Assorted donations
3rd - $ + Assorted donations
* Amount of cash is TBA until registration is complete.
All players get: T-shirt
Final night banquet
Drinks during event
(4) Raffle tickets towards lots of cool prizes
Lots of games (minimum 4)
*FEB 22nd - Free clinic at 3pm and exhibition matches at 6pm and 7pm between men and women professionals from US and Japan.
*Raffle tickets will be sold for a chance to have one of the Pro players as your partner. They will not be playing together. Drawing to take place Friday, 2/22/08 at the exhibition match.
For more details or to sign up –
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Knight appointed as *Tribune* publisher

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Knight

A 22-year resident of Saipan, business executive Lynn A. Knight has been appointed publisher of the *Saipan Tribune*.

Her appointment was announced by Tan Holdings president and chief operating officer Jerry Tan.

"The role of publisher has been a position of trust and value to the company. It is a position that requires a working knowledge of journalism, advertising and business management, as well as knowledge of important issues of interest to the community," said Tan. "Because Lynn has been active in the community for many years, I'm confident that she can contribute value to the *Saipan Tribune* and lead the team in its vision of being the No. 1 newspaper in the CNMI."

Knight, who has been with the *Tribune* since 2001 as consultant and as vice president starting in 2006, brings a considerable background in journalism to the CNMI's first and only daily newspaper.

She holds Bachelor of Arts degrees in Journalism and Psychology from California State University, Chico. Her background in newspapers was established from working with The Sparks Newspapers, which owned and operated a number of daily and weekly newspapers in California.

Knight also owned her own advertising agency on Saipan, Sunset Advertising, for 14 years, before joining Tan Holdings in 2001 as vice president for Corporate Affairs, a position she holds until today.

Aside from her business responsibilities, Knight is also very active in the community. She currently chairs the Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands. She is also a board member of the Saipan International School and a member of the board of the Sugar King Charitable Foundation.

She replaces the late John "JP" Pangelinan, who passed away last Feb. 5.

"JP was loved by the staff of the *Tribune* and we all miss him very much. I will do my best to follow in his footsteps and see to it that his legacy of managing this good community newspaper lives on. I'm committed to doing whatever we can do to ensuring that we bring balanced information on issues, events of the islands and entertaining features that are of genuine interest to the community," she said.

Knight said she has already begun working closely with the newspaper team in developing a sound business plan vis-à-vis the economic downturn the CNMI is currently facing.

EPA PRESENTATION JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency pacific islands office manager John McCarroll answers a question while Commonwealth Utilities Corp. executive director Anthony Guerrero and CUC counsel Edward Manibusan listen, during a presentation to members of the House of Representatives on Capital Hill Tuesday.

Training for water operators tomorrow

The Division of Environmental Quality has scheduled continuing education training for all certified water treatment and distribution operators.

The training is set for tomorrow, Feb. 20, 2008 from 8am until 12pm at the Aqua Resort Club.

In addition to the main topic, there will be short presentations about DEQ's new computer-based water operator testing.

Questions about the training should be directed to Jose Kapait, manager for the Safe Drinking Water Program at DEQ. His phone number is 664-8500 or 664-8501. ***(DEQ)***

Lawyer insists on seeing Lao Lao's lease records

By AGNES E. DONATO
agnes_donato@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A lawyer continues to demand the disclosure of records related to the lease of the Lao Lao Bay Golf Resort property by Kumho Asiana.

Former judge Edward Manibusan made the original request under the Open Government Act on Dec. 19, 2007. Under the law, public records must be made available for inspection within 10 days of a request.

To date, the Department of Public Lands has not provided the documents.

Public Lands Secretary John S. Del Rosario said that some of the records Manibusan wants to see contain confidential financial information. The department's attorney is now talking with Manibusan regarding the request.

The documents Manibusan has requested include correspondence between Kumho Asiana and DPL concerning the lease, lease agreements concerning the Lao Lay property, and appraisal reports of the public land. Manibusan also wants to see all financial statements and reports submitted by Kumho Asiana, S.C. Properties, and UMDA in relation to the lease proposal.

In December 2007, the Legislature approved a fresh 40-year lease of the Kagman property, with an area of 161 hectares.

Kumho Asiana, which recently acquired Saipan LauLau Development Inc., plans to build a $100-million resort development project for the golf facility. The target completion date for the new facilities is July 1, 2009.

Under the proposed lease,

See LAWYER on Next Page

IN ONGOING MALITE DISPUTE,

'Demapan siblings may have interest in the contempt issue'

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Chief Justice Miguel S. Demapan should be disqualified from participating in the appeal filed by attorneys Antonio M. Atalig and Reynaldo O. Yana because his two other family members may be affected in the proceeding, according to the lawyer of various Malite heirs.

Stephen J. Nutting stated in court papers that, besides Roman Demapan, the chief justice's other brother, former Senate President Juan S. Demapan, and sister, former board chair of the defunct Marianas Public Lands Authority, Ana Demapan-Castro, may have an interest in the contempt issue on appeal.

Nutting said Juan Demapan and Ana Demapan-Castro may be affected by Atalig's suspension and or the contempt order issued by Superior Court associate judge Kenneth Govendo.

The lawyer said Atalig has submitted a declaration in support of his petition for writ of prohibition stating that he has a number of cases outstanding that will be affected by his suspension.

Nutting said one of the cases cited by Atalig was entitled "Juan Demapan vs. Pamela Brown, et al."

With respect to Demapan-Castro, Nutting said Govendo's contempt order requires that the Malite heirs' counsel prepare and serve upon the former MPLA (now the Department of Public Lands) a subpoena for records and attorney billing statements concerning the Malite land matter.

The records sought, the lawyer said, were all prepared and compiled at a time when Demapan-Castro was the chairperson of MPLA board.

"Those same records may adversely implicate her in issues related to the land compensation made to the estate of Angel Malite, and payments to counsel for the Malite estate's administrator," he said.

Nutting pointed out that it is more conceivable that Demapan-Castro would also have an interest in seeing the contempt order reversed and vacated.

He also cited that Roman Demapan received $200,000 from the $1.3 million in attorney's fees in the Malite probate. Apparently, Roman Demapan received the money due to his services as a "legal intern" at Atalig's law office.

Atalig earlier said that Nutting's motion to disqualify chief justice Demapan from the appeal is "a cheap shot" and "an attack on the integrity of the Judiciary."

Atalig said Nutting, whom he called a "loose cannon," deserves severe sanction from the high court for filing that motion.

In an amended order, Govendo found Atalig and Yana in contempt of court and suspended them from practicing law for failing to return to the court the $1.3 million in attorney's fees that had been awarded them in the Malite probate. Govendo also removed Jesus C. Tudela as the estate administrator for mismanagement.

Yana and Atalig appealed.

The high tribunal stopped the suspension and set an oral argument on March 11, 2008.

The heirs moved to intervene into the high court proceedings. They also asked that chief justice Demapan be disqualified from the case.

DISCONNECTION NOTICE

PTI would like to remind its customers that payments not received by close of business on February 20th, will result in temporary suspension of all telephone services after 6:00 p.m. on that day. To prevent temporary suspension, customers must pay their bills on or before February 20th.

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COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS

(Tuesday, February 5th, 2008)—The Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) provides advanced Public Notice of scheduled Public Hearings for the purpose of accepting written and verbal comments on proposed action to make emergency electric-fuel rate increases permanent regulations. As is permissible in Public Law 15-94, under Section 2, "The Electric-Fuel Rates may fluctuate depending on the actual cost of fuel."

Proposal Summary and Background
On November 2, 2007 Emergency Regulations were promulgated to adjust the utility rate structure to allow the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) to recover a portion of the costs it is charged by big oil companies for diesel and lube oils. The cost-recovery or fluctuating fuel costs are allowable under Section 2 of Public Law 15-94.

The adjustment, however, did not allow full cost-recovery for the utility's residential customers. This created a funding shortfall which led to the need for a Declaration of a State of Disaster Emergency, which remains in effect. (Executive Order 2007-11, Executive Order 2008-1, Executive Order 2008-2).

On January 31, 2008, the CUC published Proposed Amendments to the Electric Service Regulations in a Supplemental Commonwealth Register (Volume 30 No. 01). The proposal is to make the emergency electric-fuel rate increases permanent regulations. Copies of the Proposed Amendments to the Electric Service Regulations are available at the CUC or the Office of Attorney General. As written in the January 31, 2008, Supplemental Commonwealth Register, CUC has given thirty (30) days notice of its intent to adopt the regulations as permanent pursuant to 1 CMC § 9104(a) and to hold public hearings on the proposed regulations in each senatorial district pursuant to 4 CMC § 8142, as amended by Executive Order 2006-4.

The CUC will hold Public Hearings within each of the CNMI senatorial districts as follows:

Tuesday, February 19, 2008	**1:00 p.m.**	**Tinian** **Tinian Court House, San Jose**
Wednesday, February 20, 2008	**1:00 p.m.**	**Saipan** **Multi-Purpose Center**
Thursday, February 21, 2008	**1:00 p.m.**	**Rota** **Rota Court House**

Customer comments are encouraged now through February 29th, 2008. Please write comments or a letter to the CUC Executive Director, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950; or, via facsimile to: (670) 235-5131; or, via e-mail: betty@cucgov.net

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Tonga rioters sentenced to 11 years prison

NUKUALOFA, Tonga (Matangi Tonga)—In handing down prison terms ranging from 11 years to six months on a group of seven rioters Friday, Chief Justice Anthony Ford said that everyone in Tonga would remember that day, "as a day of infamy and shame where there was no law and order and anarchy prevailed."

In the Nuku'alofa Supreme Court Timote Pekipaki, 35, of Vaini, received 11 years imprisonment for setting fire to the Molisi Tonga Supermarket, and other crimes committed on Nov. 16, 2006.

Fiula 'Atuhekaho, 21, of Ma'ufanga, received 11 years imprisonment for destroying the Molisi Tonga Supermarket and the Island Mobile Shop and other crimes.

They were among a group of seven accused, convicted by jurors on Dec. 5 for serious offenses in the second group trial.

Their Hu'atolitoli Prison terms are effective from Friday.

Chief Justice Anthony Ford imposed prison sentences on all seven on a total of 17 charges that ranged from attending a riotous assembly, housebreaking, to the damaging and destruction of government and private properties in the Nov. 16 riots in Nuku'alofa.

The six men and one woman also included Siuta Ngahe of Pea, Mekiloni Fotu of Navutoka, Nikolasi Fiu of Hofoa, Tavake Tafolo of Halaleva, and his niece Taufa Tafolo.

The Chief Justice in his introductory general remarks to the court said everyone in Tonga would remember this day, "as a day of infamy and shame where there was no law and order and anarchy prevailed."

He said the destruction was carried out by hundreds of people who were not initially premeditated but it was an example of "the mob violence feeding upon itself.

"Over 50 percent of the Central Business District was destroyed on this fatal afternoon. It had a very dramatic impact on the economy with losses amounting to millions of pa'anga."

In his sentencing the Chief Justice then imposed a sentence of 11 years imprisonment each for Fiula 'Atuhekaho and Timote Pekipaki.

'Atuhekaho was convicted of one count of riotous assembly, one count of housebreaking and two counts of destruction of building namely the Molisi Tonga Supermarket and the Island Mobile Shop.

The Chief Justice said the destruction charges are extremely serious and used to carry a maximum imprisonment for life but now carry 15 years imprisonment.

The probation report indicated 'Atuhekaho was at a high risk of re-offending, he denied the destruction he did although the evidence against him was overwhelming and the jurors were right in their verdict, said the judge.

He was sentenced to 21 months imprisonment for riotous assembly, 6 years for housebreaking and 11 years for the two counts of destruction. The sentences are concurrent, making a total of 11 years in prison.

LAWYER

From Page 3

Kumho Asiana will pay rent of $103,002 a year for the 161-hectare property in Kagman, where the golf course is situated. This is a significant cut from the current rent amount of $384,000 a year.

But benefits are projected to outweigh losses from the rent reduction. The construction project is seen to spur economic activity in the next year and a half. The planned resort development will include 12-story buildings with 128 rooms, as well as seven luxury villas. The development will also improve facilities for golfers. In addition to three new recreation clubhouses for golfers, current golf courses will be redesigned to meet world golf championship standards.

Asiana Airlines, which increased its Saipan flights to 18 weekly beginning January 2008, plans to continue adding flights to back up Kumho's investment in the golf facility.

NMC

From Page 1

during the time the college is on sanction."

NMC said they are still interested in opening the academic sites at the two locations and they plan on doing so in time.

"However, it is not our priority right now," said NMC Institutional Advancement director Mark Mendiola.

Currently, only federal programs are still available at the Tinian and Rota instructional sites. These federal programs include the Cooperative Research, Extension and Education Service, Upward Bound Adult Basic Education, Educational Talent Search, and other professional development workshops that focus on vocational and professional training.

The Substantive Change Proposal is due anytime NMC is willing to pursue reopening any classes or programs at the sites.

According to NMC's progress report by the accrediting commission, NMC had determined that educational and student services at the Tinian and Rota sites are not equal to that on Saipan, therefore the college suspended offering credit courses at the two sites on Oct. 8, 2007.

Students under the affected program were transferred to the Saipan campus and their upkeep is currently on the government's dime.

The progress report further stated, "At this time the college president and the Board of Regents appear to understand that there will be continuing political pressure to provide instructional and support services on Tinian and Rota; however, they also appear to understand that it will not be possible to meet accreditation."

Recently, the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges had asked the college to show cause why its accreditation should not be withdrawn.

The commission's Western Association of Schools and Colleges, or WASC, took the action against NMC because the college still has not addressed concerns previously raised by the commission.

NMC has been on probation since February 2007.

Accreditation officials are expected to visit the college in the next few months.

Bill pushes for changes at NMC

Lawmakers are looking to change the composition of future boards of regents for Northern Marianas College and to require more detailed financial reports from the college.

Rep. Stanley T. Torres has introduced a bill that would require that at least five of the NMC regents be from the business sector and non-profit organizations.

The bill, which was cosponsored by all of the 19 other House members, would also mandate NMC to provide detailed financial reports, and require the college to deposit its funds at federally insured banking institutions in the Commonwealth.

House Bill 15-26 is a watered-down version of the original bill Torres introduced in the 15th Legislature. The original proposal sought to raise the educational qualifications of the members of the NMC Board of Regents and the college president, and to require legislative appropriation of NMC funding. It also contained findings that accused the college of misspending public funds on questionable operations and activities, consulting fees, and legal services.

Torres reintroduced the measure amid NMC's accreditation problems. The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges-Western Association of Schools and Colleges has ordered NMC to show cause why its accreditation should not be withdrawn.

The commission took the action against NMC because the college has failed to address problems that had been ongoing for many years.

Accreditation is important because it proves to the public that a college meets standards of quality, and allows students to access financial aid programs. In addition, many institutions look at accreditation when deciding whether to allow transfer of credits.

In some cases, loss of accreditation could lead to closure of the college. ***(Agnes E. Donato)***

SADNESS

From Page 1

The so-called "misery is not miserly" phenomenon is well-known to psychologists, advertisers and personal shoppers alike, and has been documented in a similar study in 2004.

The new study released Friday by researchers from four universities goes further, trying to answer whether temporary sadness alone can trigger spendthrift tendencies.

The study found a willingness to spend freely by sad people occurs mainly when their sadness triggers greater "self-focus." That response was measured by counting how frequently study participants used references to "I," "me," "my" and "myself" in writing an essay about how a sad situation such as the one portrayed in the video would affect them personally.

The brief video was about the death of a boy's mentor. Another group watched an emotionally neutral clip about the Great Barrier Reef, the vast coral reef system off Australia's coast.

On average, the group watching the sad video offered to pay nearly four times as much for a sporty-looking, insulated water bottle than the group watching the nature video, according to the study by researchers from Harvard, Carnegie Mellon, Stanford and Pittsburgh universities.

Thirty-three study subjects—young adults who responded to an advertisement offering $10 for participation—were offered the chance to trade some of the $10 to buy the bottle. The sad group offered to trade an average of $2.11, compared with 56 cents for the neutral group.

Despite the big difference, participants in the sad group typically insisted that the video's emotional content didn't affect their willingness to spend more—an incorrect assumption, said one of the study's co-authors.

"This is a phenomenon that occurs without awareness," Jennifer Lerner, a Harvard professor who studies emotion and decision making, said in a phone interview. "This is really different from the idea of retail therapy, where people are feeling negative and want to cheer themselves up by shopping. People have no idea this is going on."

The researchers concluded sadness can trigger a chain of emotions leading to extravagant tendencies. Sadness leads people to become more focused on themselves, causing the person to feel that they and their possessions are worth little. That feeling increases willingness to pay more—presumably to feel better about themselves.

"Because the study used real commodities and real money, results hold implications for everyday decisions," according to the authors of the study, to be published in the journal Psychological Science, and presented Saturday at a meeting of the Society for Social and Personality Psychology.

Edward Charlesworth, a Houston-based clinical psychologist who was not involved in the study, suggested the misery-is-not-miserly phenomenon is rooted in a culture that encourages people to buy to feel better.

"Certainly, the advertising industry knows that," Charlesworth, citing as an example a 1970s McDonald's fast-food jingle, "You deserve a break today."

Charlesworth frequently sees clients in his clinical practice who overspend to deal with difficulties.

"It's not necessarily that you go to the mall and go on a shopping spree," said Charlesworth, author of a book on stress management. "It's often more subtle—you spend a bit more on something than you normally would. But if you magnify that over the course of a year, or a lifetime, those little things add up."

Personal shoppers, who make a business of prowling the aisles for others, say they frequently see clients stray from their budgets when they're feeling blue.

"At that point, cost isn't usually a factor," said Kalyn Johnson, of New York City-based Style by Kalyn Johnson. "They say, 'If I can have these wonderful shoes, I'll look better, and feel better.'

"But on the back end, I've seen buyer's remorse. This kicks in after they realize that new pair of shoes, or iPod, or whatever, didn't make them feel better, and then there's that sense of, 'Oh my God, why did I spend money on this?'"

The study released Friday was funded by grants from the National Science Foundation and National Institute of Health. Besides Lerner, the other study authors were Carnegie Mellon's Cynthia Cryder, Stanford's James Gross, and the University of Pittsburgh's Ronald Dahl.

UNLIMITED

From Page 1

If the governor declares a state of emergency, he can reprogram more than 25 percent.

Otherwise, to reprogram more than 25 percent, the governor must submit a request to the House Ways and Means Committee and the Senate Fiscal Affairs Committee, and his request would be considered approved unless either committee rejects it within 20 calendar days.

"If the reprogramming request is truly to provide for critical services, why in the world would either committee disapprove? This way, we all share responsibility for providing for those critical services, and the burden does not fall on only one person to decide what is critical and what is not," Sablan said.

The 15th Legislature gave Fitial unrestricted reprogramming authority in the absence of a budget for fiscal year 2006. The reprogramming power included funds appropriated to all public corporations, autonomous agencies, and other entities of the CNMI government.

However, it excluded funds restricted from reprogramming by federal law, federal grant conditions, CNMI constitutional prohibitions, and deposit and other security restrictions related to bond covenants and the financing of public projects.

Other exemptions are trust funds invested by the Marianas Public Land Trust and the NMI Retirement Fund, and all funds appropriated under all local laws. Funds of the legislative branch, judicial branch, Washington Representative's Office, mayors, or municipal councils were also off limits.

Police director claims conspiracy, false charges

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Department of Public Safety's Police director Aniceto T. Ogumoro has claimed that his arrest in 2006 was based on drummed up charges and was a conspiracy among then acting commissioner Juan I. Wabol and other police officers.

In his lawsuit filed in federal court Friday, Ogumoro said Wabol, Maj. Edward Manalili, and Police Officers James Guerrero, Christopher Leon Guerrero and Jesse Seman and 20 unnamed co-defendants devised a plan on how to search and ultimately arrest him based on lack of probable cause.

According to the complaint filed by Ogumoro through attorney Viola Alepuyo, it was Leon Guerrero who drafted the affidavit of probable cause in support of the issuance of an arrest warrant for Ogumoro, who was at the time the acting police director.

But Ogumoro alleged that Leon Guerrero relied on information provided to him based on actions from 1998 and 2000 as justification to search the then police director's home and ultimately his arrest.

"Wabol, Manalili, Guerrero, Seman, and John Does knew or should have known that defendant Leon Guerrero had intentionally used information over six years old and failed to conduct follow up investigation as necessary to establish probable cause for the charges against Mr. Ogumoro," the complaint stated.

Ogumoro sued Wabol, Manalili, Guerrero, Leon Guerrero, and Seman in their personal capacity. DPS and 20 unnamed persons were also included as co-defendants.

He sued them for unlawful arrest, illegal detention and confinement, illegal strip search, conspiracy, deprivation of his statutory rights, malicious prosecution, malicious abuse of process, violation of civil rights, false arrest and imprisonment, battery, intentional infliction of emotional distress, and negligent infliction of emotional distress.

The police director asked the U.S. District Court for the NMI to order the defendants to pay him damages.

Ogumoro was the acting police director when police officers arrested him on Feb. 11, 2006, after they raided his house on Capital Hill where they reportedly recovered three rifles and 25 boxes of ammunition.

He was charged, but the Attorney General's Office's later moved to dismiss the case after Superior Court associate judge Kenneth Govendo suppressed all the evidence seized at the raid.

At the time, the complaint said, Wabol was the acting commissioner, while Manalili was the chief of the Criminal Investigation Bureau and Guerrero was the CIB supervisor. Leon Guerrero was a detective at CIB and Seman was a police officer. The police officers have denied there was a conspiracy.

In December 2006, Ogumoro was appointed police director.

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San Nicolas finds worker's health problems argument unconvincing

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Labor Secretary Gil M. San Nicolas has found unconvincing the arguments posed by a garment worker who had appealed a Labor hearing officer's order dismissing his complaint and ordering him to leave the Commonwealth.

San Nicolas said Yiming Xiong is inconsistent with his claims against his former employer, Rifu Apparel Corp., and failed to provide proof for any of them.

"In addition to his unsubstantiated claims, the fact that Mr. Xiong waited 10 months after resigning from his job, eight months after his permit expired to file a labor complaint makes his motivations for filing a labor complaint suspicious," said the Labor Secretary in his order that dismissed the worker's appeal.

According to Labor records, Xiong began working for Rifu Apparel in September 2005. He testified that around November or December 2005, his supervisor told him to report for work at 7:30am. Xiong did not time-in when he arrived. He timed in at the normal starting time of 8am. He testified that he reported early six days per week.

Complainant stated he expected either to be paid overtime or receive an increased salary but neither happened.

Xiong never complained to the management or otherwise attempted to resolve his claim of unpaid overtime with his employer.

He resigned from his job on July 12, 2006. The reason stated in the resignation letter was because he was unable to get along with his supervisor.

At the hearing, complainant testified that the real reason he resigned was because of health problems. No evidence of medical treatment was submitted and complainant was never told by a physician that he could not work.

He testified that he really only wanted to take some time off to rest, but he never reported back to work after the resignation date.

Ms. Shu Ji Li, respondent's factory manager, testified that she was complainant's supervisor. Li denied ever instructing Xiong to come to work early and stated she had no knowledge that he had ever done so.

In his administrative order issued on July 25, 2007, then Labor administrative hearing officer Barry Hirshbein ruled that Xiong presented no evidence in support of his monetary claim. Hirshbein said Xiong's credibility is strained in this case.

The hearing officer noted that Xiong quit his job and did not work for 10 months and then made this claim for money damages and transfer relief.

The hearing officer finds that complainant has not met his burden of proof in this case.

Hirsbein said the complainant was already out of status for over eight months before filing the case.

"Even if complainant had met his burden with respect to unpaid overtime, labor complaints are not intended to be vehicles for restoring status to workers who do not diligently assert their rights," said Hirsbein in dismissing the complaint and denying Xiong transfer relief.

Xiong appealed. In his letter to San Nicolas, he asserted that to prove his unpaid wages claim, he had provided the working calendar to the hearing officer.

Xiong said he really has chronic disease and that he has a witness to certify for his ailment.

In affirming Hirshbein's order, San Nicolas said Xiong's letter states one thing and he presents two other arguments during the hearing—overtime and health problems—but without evidence.

San Nicolas said that, although the complainant stated he has a witness regarding his health problems, this "person" never certified the health claims.

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARING
Second Floor Afetña Square Building, San Antonio P.O. Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950

NOTICE OF HEARINGS PENDING LABOR CASES

Monday, Feb. 18, 2008 first notice
Monday, Feb. 25, 2008 second notice

Notice is hereby given to the persons listed below to appear at the Hearing Office, Department of Labor, Second Floor, Afetna Square Building, San Antonio, on the date and at the time listed below. Your claims will be heard at that time or continued to a date certain. Please bring any documentation necessary to the resolution of your claims or defenses to claims against you. In particular, if you have wage claims please bring supporting documentation. If you fail to appear, or fail to bring documentation, your claims or defenses may be dismissed, and an administrative order may be entered against you.

If your case has been resolved through a settlement, or you are a claimant and wish to withdraw your claims, please call Jeffrey Camacho, Investigator, 236-0960, or come to the Enforcement Office at the Department of Labor.

THIS NOTICE IS POSTED AT THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR.

Case No.	Employee	Employer	Hearing date	Time
06-103	Hong, Fu Hua	American Pacific Textile	Mar. 25, 2008	9:00 a.m.
06-336	Lin, Deyao	American RF Corp.	Mar. 25, 2008	9:00 a.m.
06-163	Wang, Yanzhen	American Sai Green Corp.	Mar. 25, 2008	9:00 a.m.
06-173	Bernardo, Solina S.	Bema Corporation	Mar. 25, 2008	9:00 a.m.
06-215	Pesado, M. Mila C.	Cabrera, Rosalie and Aurora Parial	Mar. 26, 2008	9:00 a.m.
06-091	Fan, Zhi Yan	Capital Corporation	Mar. 25, 2008	9:00 a.m.
06-029	Shi, Changsan	Commonwealth Garment MFG	Mar. 25, 2008	10:00 a.m.
06-220	Jin, Aifang	Concorde Garment MFG Corp.	Mar. 25, 2008	10:00 a.m.
06-119	Wu, Liyu	Concorde Garment MFG Corp.	Mar. 25, 2008	10:00 a.m.
06-016	Xu, Zhang Yu	Concorde Garment MFG Corp.	Mar. 25, 2008	10:00 a.m.
06-147	Yang, Wan Jun	Concorde Garment MFG Corp.	Mar. 25, 2008	10:00 a.m.
05-383	Zhang, Hairu	Concorde Garment MFG Corp.	Mar. 25, 2008	10:00 a.m.
06-016	Zhang, Jaijing	Concorde Garment MFG Corp.	Mar. 25, 2008	10:00 a.m.
06-085	Zhou, Cuixia	Concorde Garment MFG Corp.	Mar. 25, 2008	10:00 a.m.
06-122	Chen, Meier	Concorde Garment MFG. Corp.	Mar. 25, 2008	10:00 a.m.
06-025 (T)	Fang, Shunfu	Crisostomo, Melvin K.	Mar. 25, 2008	9:00 a.m.
06-277	Mario, Aquino V.	Cruz, Theresa R.	Mar. 25, 2008	9:00 a.m.
06-048	Zhang, Qing	Date Corporation	Mar. 25, 2008	9:00 a.m.
02-041	Lin, Yawen	FWL Association, Inc.	Mar. 26, 2008	11:00 a.m.
02-041	Xu, Zhenlong	FWL Association, Inc.	Mar. 26, 2008	11:00 a.m.
06-092	Lu, Jinhong	Happy, Inc.	Mar. 25, 2008	9:00 a.m.
06-136	Jin, Fenghua	Hyunjin Saipan, Inc.	Mar. 25, 2008	10:00 a.m.
06-158	Wang, Ling Fang	Hyunjin Saipan, Inc.	Mar. 25, 2008	10:00 a.m.
06-295	Esquerra, Antonio D.	Javili General Partnership	Mar. 25, 2008	9:00 a.m.
06-238	Li, Haisen	Long Teng Corp.	Mar. 25, 2008	11:00 a.m.
06-237	Zhou, Yingying	Long Teng Corp.	Mar. 25, 2008	11:00 a.m.
06-213	Lu, Yuhua	Long Tong Corp.	Mar. 25, 2008	11:00 a.m.
06-275	Lim, Elizabeth P.	Lucky Corporation	Mar. 25, 2008	11:00 a.m.
06-143	Okawa, Kiyoshi P.	Mabu Corp. dba Ken Restaurant	Mar. 25, 2008	11:00 a.m.
06-290	Wan, Hongyu	Marianas Garment MFG Inc.	Mar. 25, 2008	11:00 a.m.
06-008	Zhu, Jin Hong	Michigan, Inc.	Mar. 25, 2008	11:00 a.m.
06-310	Huang, Lingen	MZ Corporation	Mar. 26, 2008	9:00 a.m.
06-271	Weng, Guangxiong	Napias Corp.	Mar. 26, 2008	9:00 a.m.
06-340	Su, Xu	Poong In Saipan, Inc.	Mar. 26, 2008	9:00 a.m.
06-140	Ding, Guozheng	Rifu Apparel Cor.	Mar. 26, 2008	10:00 a.m.
06-356	Ji, Feng Nu	Rifu Apparel, Inc.	Mar. 26, 2008	10:00 a.m.
06-230	Xia, Liying	Rifu Apparel, Inc.	Mar. 26, 2008	10:00 a.m.
06-027	Xu, Que Hua	Rifu Apparel, Inc.	Mar. 26, 2008	10:00 a.m.
06-281	Zhu, Zhongping	Rifu Apparel, Inc.	Mar. 26, 2008	10:00 a.m.
06-339	Ignacio, Gilbert P.	Sablan, Lisa P.	Mar. 26, 2008	9:00 a.m.
06-011	Zeng, Li Ying	Seishin Farm, Inc.	Mar. 26, 2008	9:00 a.m.
06-357	Song, Nai Jun	Song Xu Development Corp.	Mar. 26, 2008	10:00 a.m.
06-311	Zhang, Hua	Success Int'l Corp.	Mar. 26, 2008	10:00 a.m.
06-005	Bai, Xa Hong	Taitingfong, Roman A.	Mar. 26, 2008	10:00 a.m.
06-040	Lin, Bing Rong	Taitingfong, Roman A.	Mar. 26, 2008	10:00 a.m.
06-104	Xu, Yuanmei	United Int'l Corp.	Mar. 26, 2008	11:00 a.m.
06-261	Yaekmum, Suthian	United Int'l Corp.	Mar. 26, 2008	11:00 a.m.
06-318	Elloso, Rolando D.C.	Valenzuelas Janitorial	Mar. 26, 2008	11:00 a.m.
06-284	Piao, Yongzhe	Vision Corporation	Mar. 26, 2008	11:00 a.m.
06-346	Ren, Tianchen	Walvo Enterprises	Mar. 26, 2008	11:00 a.m.
06-345	Xu, Qianjun	Walvo Enterprises	Mar. 26, 2008	11:00 a.m.
06-071	Zhou, Lina	Winners Corporation	Mar. 26, 2008	11:00 a.m.
06-334	Talukdar, Hari N.	Yun's Corporation	Mar. 26, 2008	11:00 a.m.
06-294	Miao, Guojun (ER)	Zhang, Hua (EE)	Mar. 26, 2008	11:00 a.m.

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
State Board of Education
Public School System
P. O. Box 501370, Saipan, MP 96950

Invitation For Bid
IFB 08-023

The CNMI Public School System and the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) are soliciting competitive sealed bids for the **Construction of Building "J" to be located at Marianas High School, Saipan.**

Detailed information on the scope of work and specifications are available, for a fee, at Pacific Quick Print & Post located in Middle Road, Garapan, Saipan. **All interested bidders, prior to obtaining copies of the detailed information, shall register with the PSS Office of Procurement & Supply.**

All bids shall be in a sealed envelope face marked "IFB 08-023" containing (1) original and five (5) copies and submitted to the PSS Procurement and Supply Office no later than March 4, 2008 at 10:00 a.m. Responsibility Determination documents shall be placed in a separate envelope marked "IFB 08-023, CONFIDENTIAL - Responsibility Determination" (1-original and one copy). Any bid after the aforementioned date and time will not be accepted under any circumstance.

Bidders are advised that this project is subject to compliance with the Davis-Bacon Act and the labor standard provisions for wage rate determination of the Commonwealth. All labor on the project shall be paid no less than the minimum wage rate of $ 3.55 per hour which took effect on July 25, 2007 as established by Federal law including subsequent increases of $.50 per hour that is scheduled to take effect on May 26, 2008 and extending further, until the hourly rate equals that of the Federal Minimum Wage of $ 7.50 per hour.

Bidding procedures shall be in compliance with CNMI Public School System Procurement Regulations. Article 7, "Local Business Preference", as amended by Public Law 15-95 and as further amended by Public Law 15-118, is not available to local bidders in this procurement because its use is prohibited by the Federal law granting the funding for this project.

This project is funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), under its Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) provided to the Commonwealth. This project is also subject to Section 3 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1968 which requires recipients of HUD funds and the Contractors to help insure that the economic opportunities generated by these funds are provided to local low-income residents and the businesses that serve them "to the maximum extent feasible."

The CNMI Public School System hereby notifies bidders that it will affirmatively insure that in any contract entered into pursuant to this advertisement, women and small business enterprises will be afforded full opportunity to submit proposals and will not be discriminated against on grounds of race, color, national origin, political affiliation, creed, sex, religion, age, familial status, and disability status.

Pursuant to the Governor's Directive 251 dated March 15, 2006, bidders are required to include a Clearance from the Office of the Insurance Commissioner with respect to the financial bonding capability of the bidders' chosen Surety.

Performance time for completion of this project is One Hundred Sixty (160) Calendar days beginning with the date of Notice to Proceed. The Contractor shall pay to the CNMI Public School System the greater sum of **U.S. $100.00 per day (One Hundred Dollars), or 2% of the total contract price divided by the number of calendar days of the contract time**, not as a penalty, but as reasonable liquidated damages for failing, neglecting, or refusing to complete the work within the time herein specified, and said sums shall be paid for each consecutive calendar day that the Contractor shall be in default beyond the time stipulated for completing the work.

A pre-bid conference will be held at the PSS Conference Room, 3rd Floor NMI Retirement Fund Building, on February 22, 2008 at 10:00 a.m.

Technical questions shall be in writing and addressed to Mr. Carl Dela Cruz, Acting Procurement & Supply Officer, via fax # (670) 664-3791. Alternatively, questions may be e-mailed to the following address: **delacruze@pss.cnmi.mp**.

The Public School System reserves the right to award single or multiple awards or to reject any or all bids, in whole or in part, if to do so is in the best interest of the Public School System.

All bids shall become the property of the CNMI Public School System.

/S/ Dr. David M. Borja, D.B.A.
Commissioner of Education

/S/ Manuel A. Sablan
NMHC Board Chairman

/S/ Carl Dela Cruz, M.B.A.
Acting P&S Officer

COMMONWEALTH DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
P.O. Box 502149, Saipan MP 96950
Tel: (670) 234-6245/6293/7145/7146 • Fax: (670) 235-7147
Email: administration@cda.gov.mp • Website: www.cda.gov.mp

INVITATION TO BID
PACIFIC GARDENIA HOTEL SUNSET BAR & GRILL

The Commonwealth Development Authority (CDA) is soliciting bids for the sale of the PACIFIC GARDENIA HOTEL SUNSET BAR & GRILL. Sale includes CDA's interest in the following sites:

• Site 1	- Lot 008 H 33	- 1,017 sqm	Sunset Bar & Grill
• Site 2	- Lot 008 H 36	- 479 sqm	Residential Home
• Site 3	- Lot 008 H 37	- 780 sqm	Hotel
• Site 4	- Lot 008 H 29	- 950 sqm	Parking north of hotel (leasehold interest)
• Site 5	- Lot 008 H 31	- 1,413 sqm	Former Seoul Rest.(subject to lease)

LOTS ARE FREE OF CNMI TAX LIENS AND REDEMPTION PERIOD, BUT TITLE IS NOT OTHERWISE WARRANTED.

The sale shall be subject to the following terms and conditions:
1. Minimum bid - $1,000,000.00.
2. Sale will be granted to the highest bidder.
3. PGH Lots are being sold as a package.
4. PGH Lots are being sold at its current condition, **"AS IS"**.
5. PGH Lots are being sold **"WITHOUT WARRANTY"** of any type.
6. CDA reserves the right to reject any and all bids and to withdraw this notice and postpone the sale from time to time.

Interested party or person may contact Oscar C. Camacho, Acting Chief Executive Officer (ACEO) at 234-6245 or 234-7145 for further information. Failure to inspect the property will not constitute grounds for any claim, adjustment or rescission by any buyer. All sales are final.

A deposit of 10% of the total price bid must be paid on the day of the auction sale. The remaining balance will be due within ten (10) days of the auction sale. All payments must be made by cash, cashier's check or credit card. Failure to make payment of the remaining balance within ten (10) days will result in forfeiture by the buyer of the ten percent (10%) deposit, and any and all of the buyer's rights, title and interest in any of the aforementioned property will revert to CDA.

Interested party or person is asked to submit their bid at the CDA Saipan Office in a sealed envelop identified as "Pacific Gardenia Hotel Bid" addressed to Mr. Oscar C. Camacho, ACEO. Deadline to submit bid is **10:00 a.m. Wednesday, March 12, 2008.**

Dated this 12th day of February 2008.

COMMONWEALTH DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

/s/ Oscar C. Camacho
Acting Chief Executive Officer

SaipanCell launches new BlackBerry smartphone

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSISTANT EDITOR

MARK RABAGO

SaipanCell Communications business sales senior manager Joe Guerrero, left, and retail operations manager Paulina A. Johnson show off their BlackBerry 8830 World Edition smartphones during the equipment's launch on Saipan at the company's main outlet along Middle Road in Gualo Rai Friday.

SaipanCell Communications on Friday unveiled its BlackBerry 8830 World Edition smartphone on Saipan and it is expected to go straight to the top of the totem pole among PDA phones in the local market.

Joe Guerrero, SaipanCell's business sales senior manager, said the introduction of the BlackBerry 8830 is expected to be a boon to the islands' businessmen, especially for on-the-go types that want access to the Internet wherever they are.

He said the BlackBerry 8830's Internet connection speed is unrivaled on island. He should know since he, along with a majority of the company's staff and 20 VIPs on Saipan, including Gov. Benigno R. Fitial, were given the equipment to test weeks in advance.

Aside from being an ideal Internet tool, the BlackBerry 8830 also boasts of a quadband feature, which means people traveling to Guam, the Philippines, Hong Kong, China, and Australia can still use the smartphone since it can easily shift from CDMA to GSM use.

SaipanCell Communications launched the BlackBerry 8830 last week in collaboration with Research In Motion.

SaipanCell's network provides BlackBerry smartphone customers with widely available coverage on the island and in areas of the CNMI.

The initial offering includes BlackBerry Enterprise Server, BlackBerry Internet Service and the BlackBerry 8830 World Edition smartphone on Saipan.

With the BlackBerry solution on SaipanCell's CDMA network, SaipanCell's customers will now be able to benefit from wireless access to email, phone, Internet, text messaging, organizer and corporate data applications from a single handset with advanced security features and exceptional ease-of-use.

The BlackBerry 8830 is and full-featured and stylish handset and it is the first BlackBerry smartphone that supports both CDMA and GPRS connectivity, allowing customers to take advantage of SaipanCell's roaming services while traveling outside the country.

The BlackBerry 8830 from SaipanCell includes:

■ Support for dual-band 800/1900 MHz CDMA2000® 1X Ev-DO networks and dual-band 900/1800 MHz GSM/GPRS networks.

■ Built-in GPS (Global Positioning System) to support location-based applications and services.

■ Stereo headset jack and media player, able to play MP3 and AAC music files and MPEG4 and H.263 video files.

■ Large, high resolution (320 x 240), ultra-bright landscape display, highly tactile keyboard and intuitive trackball navigation provides an exceptional user experience.

■ Innovative light-sensing technology that automatically optimizes the display and keyboard lighting for indoor, outdoor and dark environments.

■ High performance HTML browser for accessing web sites while on the go.

■ Support for polyphonic, MP3 and MIDI ring tones that can be assigned to different contacts.

■ A removable, rechargeable, high-capacity battery.

Premium phone features include noise cancellation for enhanced audio performance, speaker independent voice recognition for voice activated dialing, "send," "end," and "mute" keys, low-distortion speakerphone and Bluetooth® to support hands-free accessories.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

MMAC Committee meeting tomorrow

There will be a Marianas March Against Cancer Committee meeting tomorrow, Feb. 20, 2008, 12pm, at Pierre's Restaurant, in Garapan.

The Marianas March Against Cancer Committee is inviting all committee members to attend this monthly meeting where important information regarding the upcoming 2008 MMAC will be discussed. If anyone in the community is interested in joining this unique committee we encourage you to attend this meeting. For more information, e-mail Chris A. Concepcion at chrisaconcepcion@gmail.com. ***(MMAC)***

MHS Class of '88 meeting

This is to inform the Class of 1988 of Marianas High School that there will be a meeting on Thursday, Feb. 21, 2008 at 7pm at the Kagman Community Center. This is to update plans on the upcoming 20th class reunion. All classmates are encouraged to attend this important meeting. For more information, contact Lillian Lizama Tudela at 287-3742 or Dennis Villagomez at 287-4689. ***(PR)***

2007 1120-CM Forms released Friday

The Division of Revenue and Taxation wishes to inform all CNMI businesses that the distribution of the 2007 1120-CM Forms and Instructions began Friday, Feb. 15, 2008 from 8am to 4pm at the Office of the Division of Revenue and Taxation, located at the Joeten DanDan Commercial Center. The 1120-CM Form and Supplemental Instruction are also available online at www.dof.gov.mp.

All businesses are asked to pick up the forms during the regular business hours. The deadline for filing 2007 1120-CM Form is Monday, March 17, 2008 at 4:30pm. ***(DoF)***

Labor chief confident in Kaipat's capability

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Labor Secretary Gil M. San Nicolas has expressed confidence that former representative Cinta Kaipat will perform her new job well as Labor deputy secretary, particularly in the outreach program for Public Law 15-108 or the new labor reform law and its regulations.

San Nicolas told *Saipan Tribune* that everyone knows that Kaipat used to work at Labor as administrative hearing officer.

"With her knowledge and expertise, she can help the department educate and inform the community, especially the employers and the workers regarding the new law and the new procedures that's taking place in the department," he said.

As lawmaker, Kaipat was the principal author of the controversial P.L. 15-108.

In an earlier interview, Kaipat said she is focusing on the community outreach program to educate the public about the new law.

Kaipat said she is very happy because the outreach program that she already started has been getting positive response from employers and employees.

Before she became a lawmaker, Kaipat used to serve as Labor administrative hearing officer for five years.

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial said Kaipat as Labor deputy secretary will be in charge of community outreach "to be sure everyone understands the much-improved structure of our citizen worker-preference and or guest worker program."

The governor said that, as author of the new labor reform law, the former congresswoman spent more than a year in getting it drafted in a way that took into account the input from all parts of the community, including new provisions for foreign workers.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ
New Department of Labor deputy secretary Cinta M. Kaipat works at her office in San Antonio.

Saipan Tribune attends journalism workshop at UOG

By RIANNE PANGELINAN-BROWN
rianne_pangelinan@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A four-hour workshop at the University of Guam, which this *Saipan Tribune* reporter attended, taught media practitioners to explore new sources of news, as the industry itself evolves in today's technological world.

The workshop, held Feb. 9 at the University of Guam's Jesus Leon Guerrero building, was conducted by University of Hawaii's Dr. Tom Brislin.

According to Brislin, there are a myriad of other news sources besides the newspaper and TV news that people could get their news from: Citizen journalism, blogs, message boards, chats, YouTube, and even Myspace. With that are the different kinds of audience and how they obtain the news from their sources.

Citizen journalism, Brislin explained, is public or participatory journalism. It is the act of citizens "playing an active role in the process of collecting, reporting, analyzing and disseminating news and information."

With places such as blogs and message boards, people are allowed to speculate, to guess what is going on, and their audiences can respond by speaking their mind. With newspaper writing, journalists are only allowed to write what is factual.

"More people, however, still rely on newspapers and television news to get the real story. Although many people respond to blogging and message boards, people rely on the newspapers and television news for the truth," Brislin said.

Through blogging, though, the truth will come out eventually, he said. As more people touch bases on a particular subject therefore disseminating a multitude of information, "the truth will arise."

Citizen journalism, Brislin explained, is also known as public or participatory journalism. It is the act of citizens "playing an active role in the process of collecting, reporting, analyzing and disseminating news and information."

When it comes to news writing, journalists and reporters often think that there should only be one source where they should get their story.

However, Brislin said that another great place of gathering data is through the community members, otherwise known as "crowd-sourcing."

"Let's use those people out there to feed data. Get the audience to work for you because the government will not talk," Brislin said.

A question that Brislin posed was if today's media still have room for good journalism.

For many newspapers, "it's about getting the scoop." The major, most important thing with newspapers is to outscoop their competing newspapers. However, because of such, many fail to publish correct information. Newspapers feel they can always correct that later just as long as they get the scoop.

To Brislin, that does not make good journalism as it also messes up the newspaper's credibility.

Creativity is another important factor in journalism.

On the worldwide web, many bloggers copy and paste their sources. According to Brislin, that's alright for them to do as everything on the Web belongs to everybody. With newspaper writing, such thing is considered plagiarism. One can be creative provided that one presents facts.

So is journalism technology a fad or it is here to stay? For as long as there people online wanting to speak their minds and people responding to them like "rabid dogs", blogs will always become available for readers, Brislin said.

However, "the media is the only front to information. We're the elite," Brislin said.

Schools officials train on improving relations

By RIANNE PANGELINAN-BROWN
rianne_pangelinan@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

School officials attended a professional development training on Saturday at the Saipan Southern High School to better improve their working relations with each other and other schools in the Public School System.

The graduate level work provided by Dr. Joseph Pascerelli of the University of Portland schooled the staff on the importance of having a work effective dialogue with one another.

The program is a continuing series that school administrators need to practice, attend, and implement in their work environment all the time.

"It's never ending," described Pascarelli.

Education Commissioner Dr. David Borja said the training is vital as it enhances an educator's capabilities in addressing concerns and to build stronger working relationships among principals, vice principals and the rest of the central office staff.

"In order to focus and to have renewal or growth within our personal knowledge base, there has to be collegiality. We need to communicate with each other and we need others to help us," said Borja.

He added that change has to take place, therefore learning from others and effective communication is vital to positive changes.

Another part of this professional training is to provide a mechanism for school administrators on how to complete the school administrator's certification requirements.

EMO warns of high surf, rip currents

The Emergency Management Office is warning the public to stay out of the water due to strong waves that are expected to last until tomorrow evening, Feb. 20, 2008.

In a high surf advisory it issued yesterday, EMO said that a north swell generated by strong winds east of Japan will bring hazardous surf to north facing exposures of the Mariana islands for the next few days. The high surf advisory is in effect until 6pm Wednesday.

A high surf advisory means that hazardous surf is occurring and dangerous rip currents will affect exposed reefs and beaches in the advisory area.

Hazardous surfof 7 to 9 feet was expected last night and today in north facing reefs. The high surf is projected to peak today at 8 to 10 feet.

On Rota, high surf is projected for Teteto Beach, while on Saipan, of particular concern is the Achugau Beach.

EMO said the surf should then subside to below hazardous levels by Thursday.

EMO is strongly advising the public—especially fishermen, tour operators, divers and swimmers—to stay out of the water, or avoid venturing exposed beaches especially along north facing reefs, where rip currents will be life threatening. ***(EMO)***

Emergency preparedness for people with disabilities

The Governor's Task Force on Emergency Preparedness for People with Disabilities met recently to discuss important items on the agenda such as the upcoming training on Emergency Preparedness covering individuals with disabilities and the ADA.

The training is being coordinated in support and collaboration with the CNMI Office of Homeland Security, the Governor's Task Force on Emergency Preparedness for People with Disabilities and the Office of Disability Policy Programs, Office of the Governor.

Cindy Daniel, National Disability Coordinator, DHS/FEMA will be traveling to the CNMI to conduct the training very soon.

"Now That We've Met, What Do I Say?" and "How to Prepare for an Emergency" are the two workshop topics and will take two days. Additionally, a one-day training on Serving People with Disabilities Following a Disaster was also discussed.

This training will be presented and provided by the American Red Cross CNMI Chapter, according the Governor's Special Assistant for Disability Policy Programs, Thomas J. Camacho.

At the recommendation and referral of the Office of Homeland Security, Daniel will provide the two-day training and additional three days of technical assistances on the following areas:

1. Assist the task force develop the first draft of the CNMI Emergency Preparedness Plan to be incorporated into the CNMI Emergency Operations Plan to be updated and published by EMO;

2. Assist the task force and EMO with the development of CNMI Emergency System of Registry for residents with disabilities;

3. Assist the task force and EMO with the development of the emergency needs assessment survey tool affecting citizens with disabilities;

4. If time permits, assist the task force assess the CNMI's designated emergency shelters for ADA compliance (architectural/policy); and

5. A follow up training on the newly adopted Emergency Preparedness Plan.

Daniel has tentatively informed ODP that her technical assistance time frame for the CNMI is between May to June this year. She will be in the CNMI for approximately one week.

As soon as she confirms the technical assistance dates, the task force will begin the planning and coordination process.

"We look forward to welcoming [Daniel] to the CNMI since this will be her first trip to our islands," said Camacho.

Daniel is the new disability coordinator for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency. She is responsible for providing guidance and coordination on emergency planning requirements and relief efforts for individuals with disabilities. As someone with a disability, Daniel has worked to empower all people with disabilities for more than 19 years.

Mostrecently,Danielworked at the National Organization on Disability in their Emergency Preparedness Initiative. She conducted research on the effects Hurricane Katrina had on people with disabilities and created an informational help desk for emergency agencies on various disability-related subjects. She also worked with the American Red Cross to formulate a training curriculum for volunteers and emergency managers on assisting people with disabilities.

She has extensive experience training groups and individuals, including "first responders" and law enforcement personnel. She has served on the Homeland Security National Task Force on Emergency Planning dealing with people with disabilities.

The purpose of the Task Force is to address the needs of individuals with disabilities in emergency planning requirements and relief efforts in the event of a major disaster and to develop a plan for emergency services that addresses the needs of people who use mobility aids such as wheelchairs, scooters, walkers, canes or crutches, or people who have limited stamina. Plans also will need to include people who use oxygen, respirators or rely on dialysis equipment, people who are blind or have low vision, people who are deaf or hard hearing, people who have a cognitive disability, people with mental illness, and those with other types of disabilities.

In October 2006, Gov. Benigno R. Fitial adopted CNMI Emergency Preparedness Policy for Individuals with Disabilities to ensure that the CNMI government appropriately supports safety and security for individuals with disabilities in situations involving disasters, including earthquakes, tornadoes, fires, floods, typhoons, and acts of terrorism.

VISITORS CENTER JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Tourists look at the World War II battles of Saipan and Tinian photos exhibited at the museum of the American Memorial Park Visitors Center.

DETECTING COUNTERFEIT

A poster on how to detect counterfeit U.S. currency is displayed while participants listen to a presentation by the United States Secret Service on how to protect oneself from Counterfeit Transactions and Identity Theft at the Saipan Grand Hotel Thursday. The event was sponsored by G4S Security Services "Marianas" and Saipan Grand Hotel.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

February 19, 2001

Construction industry inches upward

Major government projects will stimulate the construction business this year as the Department of Public Works revealed the issuance of building and construction permits worth over $6 million last month. The $5.2 million state-of-the-art Youth Detention facility project and two small-scale construction activities comprised the revenue generated by the Building Safety Code Division of DPW, safety official Donald W. Anderson disclosed Friday.

Teno sends back appropriation bills

Governor Pedro P. Tenorio last Friday tossed back to the legislature a bill that seeks to reappropriate unused funds from two public laws amounting to $256,636 for the construction and renovation of school buildings. The two appropriation mesaures were disapproved after Governor Tenorio found that Legislators failed to identify sources of fund.

CNMI expects $1.4M US grants for housing

The CNMI government is anticipating the release of more grants from the US government under various federal projects aimed at financing local housing and other development programs, according to the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation. Executive Director MaryLou S. Ada disclosed close to $1.4 million in overall federal funding has been earmarked to the Commonwealth by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development under its financial year 2001 appropriations.

February 19, 2002

Education gap widens

The Fiscal Year 2002 education revenue per public school student closed at $3,538 per child-a jolting 50 percent less than what US mainland students are getting at $7,081. The standing $3,538-figure is at its lowest in four years, a proximate result of plunging government revenues which started rolling downhill in FY1998, a Public School System FY1998 through 2002 Fiscal Outlook report showed.

CPA probes 2 incidents involving PIA airplanes

The Commonwealth Ports Authority will investigate two incidents involving the Pacific Island Aviation, following reports that 19 passengers were prevented from getting off the aircraft after a near-accident at the Saipan International Airport Saturday night. CPA Executive Director Carlos H. Salas, reacting on reports received about the incidents at the Tinian and Saipan airports, said the ports authority will launch a deeper investigation today.

DEQ mulls trail to Susupe Lake

The Division of Environmental Quality is planning to develop a trail within the wetland surrounding Lake Susupe, so that the area-considered to be one of the most beautiful landscape on Saipan-would be accessible to visitors. The project would allow the public to view the landscape and the lake, as well as the rich wildlife inhabiting the area, which includes birds and turtles. Trail guides would be detailed at the area. They would hand out educational materials and brochures to would-be visitors.

February 19, 2003

GTC Energy patrol team on the loose

To reduce the power bills of all public schools in the Commonwealth, the Gregorio T. Camacho Elementary School is piloting the Energy Patrol program by tapping the assistance of six elementary students. The students-Justin Babauta, Emoa Iguel, Joshua Mafnas, Elowena Camacho, Jerro Jones, and Rit Santos-were inducted yesterday morning as the first batch of energy patrollers who would be monitoring the GTC's consumption of water and electricity.

Teaching science beyond hands-on

Compared to other subjects, teaching science requires a little more push from teachers to make their students think, reflect, and make the connections between various elements. According to Paul Dumas, Pacific Mathematics and Science consortium director of Pacific Resources for Education and Learning, science teachers need to be trained and taught new techniques to ensure effective learning among students.

Pika, Pika, Pika!! Different kinds of Tinian Hot Pepper are seen at the Sue's Creation booth during the festival.
JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Guam's "Ukulele Whiz Kid," Ryan Imamura, 13, wows the crowd with his amazing performance.
JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Sen. Frica Pangelinan checks different kinds of Tinian Hot Pepper at Sue's Creation booth.
JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Members of the Penina Ole Jasa Polynesian dance group wait in line for their performance during the festival.
JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

A smoking hot festival on Tinian

By CLARISSA DAVID
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

TINIAN—Despite the cloudy skies, Tinian residents and visitors alike were all revved up for the 5th Tinian Hot Pepper Festival on Feb. 16-17, held at Tachonga Beach.

This year was the first time that the two-day, island-style fiesta was scheduled simultaneously with Tinian Dynasty Hotel & Casino's Texas Hold 'Em Poker Tournament.

"That's why there are a lot of tourists for the fiesta. We are honored to have local guests and tourists on Tinian. It's a real success," said MVA board member Deborah Fleming.

The festival showcased performances by the Penina Ole Basa Polynesian Dance Group, Taga Cultural Dancers, Tinian Elementary School "My Wave Club," and Guam's Ukulele Whiz Kid, Ryan Imamura.

Fourteen booths selling hot pepper products as well as arts and crafts participated in this year's festival. A winner was chosen from these participating booths and was awarded the Best Booth. The winning booth was judged based on originality, use of local materials, attractiveness, and adherence to the hot pepper theme.

The event also featured different competitions such as beach volleyball, Umang Race, Dragon Boat Rowing Contest, Mwarmwar Making Contest, and the Katdun Pika Contest.

The festival's highlight was the Tinian Hot Pepper Eating Contest, wherein the participants ate the Donni Sali, the hottest pepper in the Marianas.

Vida Borja, Field Operations Supervisor of MVA-Tinian Office, said that the festival's turnout was more than they expected. "I'm surprised because the economy is down, there's a Santa Lourdes Festival on Saipan, but there are still many people."

According to Borja, they advertised the festival in all of the Marianas' tourism markets—Korea, Japan, and China. "We want to make it another signature event for the Marianas. It would add significance to the island of Tinian."

The relentless efforts to promote the festival paid off. "The airlines and the ferries were fully booked. We got more calls, more inquiries from people abroad. It is getting more popular now because of the festival's uniqueness."

■■■

Participating vendors, however, expressed varying observations in this year's festival.

Zoey King thinks that last year's celebration was more alive. "There were more people, and the presentations had impact right from the start." King tended the booth named Hotspot, which sold pickles, hot pepper and products made of hot pepper, prepared lunches and drinks.

Ivy Maestrado, who works at AG Food Court, said there is not much difference between last year and this year. "It's just the same. But there are more tourists now. For locals, the people were divided because there's the Santa Lourdes fiesta."

For Beverly Battaglia, the outcome depends on the kind of people who actually visit. "Sales are slow, but we get different people every time." Battaglia sold her own artwork—necklaces, note cards, woven luggage belts—from her booth. She has been a resident of Tinian since 1989.

■■■

Fleming said that they want to make sure that they offer better things every year. "The goal is to keep growing," she added.

The Donna Sali helps them achieve that goal. "The pepper grows abundantly on Tinian. And in making the hot pepper, every family here has their own secret way of making it. You get to see the different recipes during the festival," she said.

Borja has high hopes for Tinian, especially since the Hot Pepper Festival is starting to get noticed in the world map. "The pepper here is great. The festival has started to get attention. Who knows, we might become more popular than Mexico."

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Opinion

Hafa Adai!
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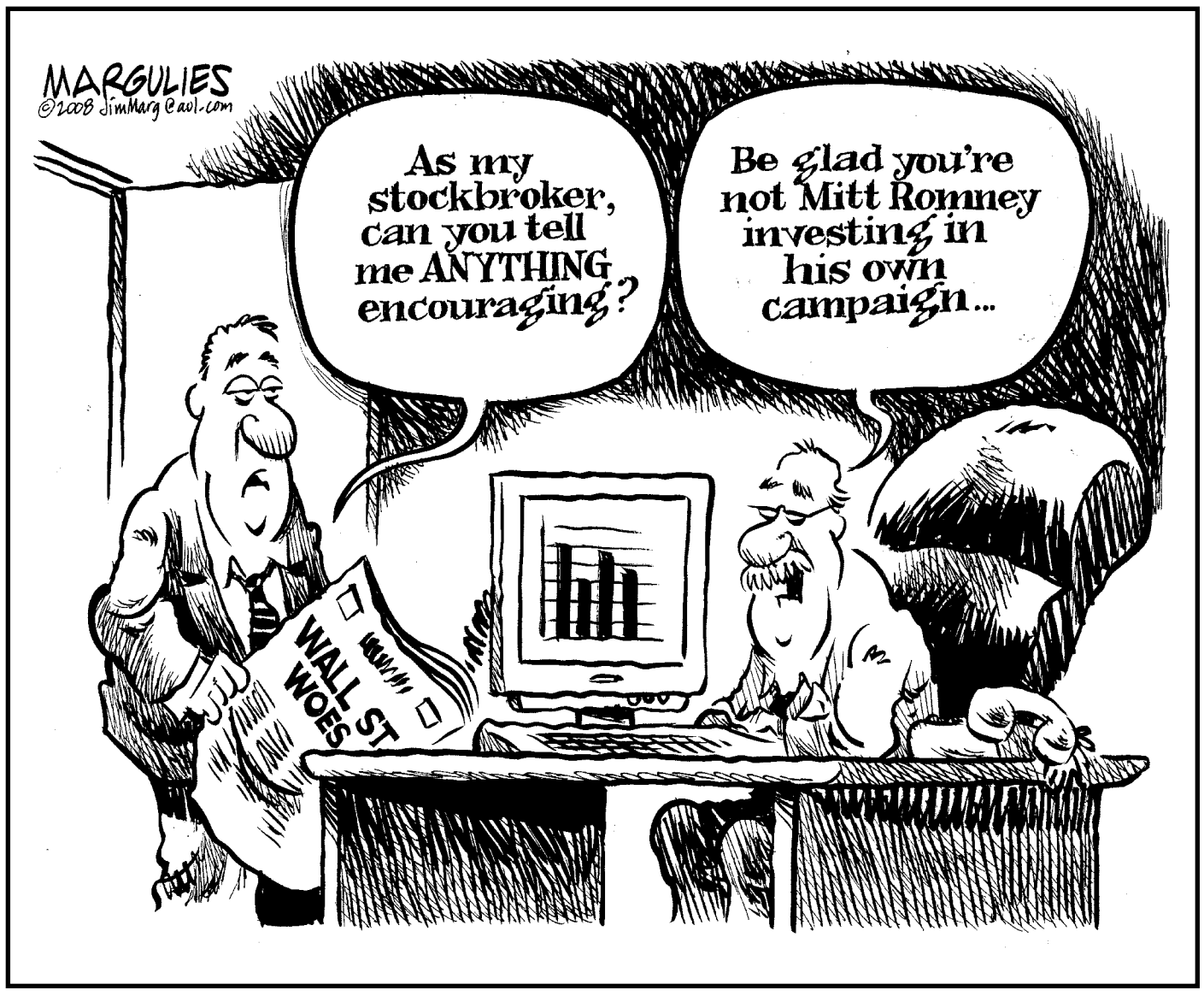
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WALL ST WOES

Sour Grapes

By BRUCE BATEMAN
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Bruce A. Bateman writes Sour Grapes when the moon is full and the mood strikes. Stay tuned for each exciting episode. "Yes, he is opinionated." Email: bbateman@pticom.com; Blog: http://saipanuvian.blogspot.com/

Fronds, tentacles and trash

Palms

My wife and I spent the weekend at the new Palms Resort. Our family business is such that we found ourselves hosting others on Valentine's Day with no time for us so we decided to treat ourselves to a romantic getaway weekend at the Palms to make up for it. That is our story and we are sticking to it.

I'll start with the negative impression, in honor of the Sour Grapes logo. The new owners have a landscaper on staff who doesn't like plants apparently. He has been attacking the once lovely gardens at the ex-Nikko Hotel with a chain saw and a small army of machete wielders. Bare dirt is found where there once were luxurious flowering shrubs, stumps where beautiful palms and mature shade providing trees once stood. Even the signature tree that the original pool was built around has fallen to the crazed chain saw murderer. Gravel, yes, gravel—as in little prickly rocks, replaces nicely trimmed greenery in a number of highly visible areas, and the desert landscaping concept seems to be growing elsewhere around the grounds.

I don't own the Palms so I don't get to choose, but I will point out that tourists come to this place to see and be part of a tropical paradise…a jungle-like setting of green and exotic blooming plants, shining crystal seas and the adventure of getting to be near plants, people and animals not found in their homelands. If they wanted a desert they would probably have gone to Arizona, or Egypt. I would suggest you leave every green mature thing you can, commensurate with your plans for expansion. You, of course, can suggest that I refrain from suggesting.

Now I must say that the owner's taste in things botanical is the only fault we (I) found with the Palms Resort (the rest of the family didn't seem to mind Sir Hacks-a-Lot and his propensity for dirt). The rest of our experience was refreshing, relaxing, fun and rewarding. The restaurants are serving up fantastic food at reasonable prices. The pool, rooms and public areas are well-maintained and clean. The staff is universally gracious and accommodating. We were made to feel right at home from the moment we walked up to the breeze wafted front desk to check in. The service was impeccable. The smiles authentic. The new owners are doing a great job; that will include finding a world-class hotelier group to act as executive managers in the months to come. The prospects for attracting many new tourists by linking with a world-renowned hotel group are exciting.

There are plans afoot to increase the size of the pool and other projects are underway that will add value and prestige to a facility already steeped in an aura of luxury and accommodation. The Palms deserves our local support. Please find your way to the foot of the hill in As Matuis/SanRoque and enjoy the fine surroundings, excellent food and friendly staff at the new Palms Resort. You'll be glad you did. (Go soon before the next attack of the Giant Bushcutter).

■■■

Octopus hat

There has been a bit of controversy about free-dive spear fishing recently. When I was a lad back in the Stone Age, we spear fished using scuba tanks and thought nothing of it except how yummy the fish tasted. Times have changed and a new ethic of conservation surrounds most everything now, including the time-honored art of fishing. The use of scuba tanks while hunting fish has been ruled an unfair advantage now that there are a lot more people and probably a lot fewer fish.

The replacement for scuba fishing is an art form that awes me. Free diving. Part art, part sport, part subsistence activity, part excitement, part commerce, free dive spear fishing and the men (mostly) that perform it are a wonder to behold. I will relate a short experience to illustrate why I hold these special fishermen in such esteem:

During the last Micronesian Games the free dive team from Guahan came here to Saipan to compete. They needed to reconnoiter the area and someone mentioned I could pilot a small boat and might take them around as they explored the reefs for the best fishing spots. I did and they did. It turned out to be an educational experience for me. I thought free divers would want to go to 20 feet or so, spear a fish and get back to the surface to hunt another. Not so. They search an area from the surface, like pilots flying along over a submarine landscape looking for their quarry. When they find a likely site they take a breath and dive down 50, 60 even 70 feet….they wait, if they take a fish and still can, they wait some more for another…finally they come back to the surface to begin the process all over again. The free divers are pulled along behind the boat on towropes until another likely spot is encountered.

They use specialized gear including very long flippers and long single shot spear guns. Most wear a thin wetsuit to help prevent hypothermia from long hours in the water and to prevent scratches and scrapes from the rocks and coral they swim down to.

The sport is a dangerous one with injury and even death possible for those brave and skilled enough to participate. They usually dive in pairs so one can keep an eye on the other as a safety precaution. When you hold your breath for 3 minutes or so and exert yourself by strong swimming, you can pass out and drown while unconscious. It is a looming threat every time they submerge. I saw these fearless free divers dive to the depths repeatedly over a two-day period, maybe 40 or 50 dives each day and I must say it was a spectacular sight.

One day, one of the divers ascended and attached to his dive suit balaclava (skin tight head cover) was a sizeable octopus, holding on for dear life. When he climbed aboard the boat he deftly peeled the octopus from his head, a tentacle at a time and explained to me that it was hard to contain a smart and wriggling octopus once caught, but if you put it on your head the creature would hold on tight and change color to match its new surroundings (your bean) and ride peacefully all the way back to the boat.

I don't free dive because I don't have the stamina or the skills to do so. I don't spearfish anymore, preferring instead to comb the depths with a camera discovering the wonders to be found there using scuba tank air so I can stay submerged for an hour or so at a time. I won't ring in with an opinion on whether certain species of fish should be taken or not because there are reasons to do so and reasons not to that are complex and run close to the hearts of people on both sides of the issue. What I will do is gush effusive about the daring (mostly) young men who go out in search of fish with nothing more than their own skill, bravery and endurance to match wits with wily aquatic creatures adept at skillful escape from predators. My hat is off to them, even if it has no resident octopus festooning it.

■■■

Tinian rocks

Speaking of things aquatic, the Marianas Dive club (of which I am a member) made a trek to Tinian this past weekend (leaving me to wax eloquently about shrubs 'n stuff back here on Saipan). They went to expand exposure of some of the scuba diving wonders to be found on that relaxing isle. They went to participate in the Hot Pepper Festival helping to educate folks about the undersea world. They went to help clean up the underwater sections of the main swimming and gathering beach there. They went to explore new dive sites with potential to be used by our tourists. They went to introduce scuba diving to a few new people. They went to have fun. They succeeded all the way around.

The Marians Dive club is a positive force trying to get the word out to the rest of the world that the Northern Marianas offers truly world-class scuba diving and it is worth a trip from just about anywhere to get here and see the beautiful and exotic wonders that Saipan, Tinian, and Rota have to offer. Diving can be a big part of tourism here and the Marianas Dive club members work hard to promote that image and to be good stewards while doing so. Please think about joining them to help tourism grow here in the CNMI.

■■■

Quotes of the week: W.C. Fields (1880 – 1946) was fond of making jokes about water, since he preferred gin. Here are a few:

"You can't trust water: Even a straight stick turns crooked in it."

"Once, during Prohibition, I was forced to live for days on nothing but food and water."

"I never drink water. I'm afraid it will become habit-forming."

"I don't drink water, isn't that the substance fish make love in?"

He also said with a straight face:

"I have spent a lot of time searching through the Bible for loopholes."

"My illness is due to my doctor's insistence that I drink milk, a whitish fluid they force down helpless babies."

All in all Fields was a pretty entertaining character.

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A look back to a different island and time

First of a two-part series

By WILLIAM H. STEWART
Special to the Saipan Tribune

William H. Stewart is an economist, historian, and military cartographer.

As a result of my interest in the NMI economy and considering the apparent difficultly in generating additional investment to pick up the slack left by the garment industry's departure, I have been examining the islands' so-called "business investment climate" and before proceeding let me stress the following assumes that the majority of residents in the NMI are not opposed to encouraging increased foreign investment, particularly during these difficult times.

From information a person receives when outside the Commonwealth through online media, e-mail, telephone conversations, etc., it's hard to believe the economy has slipped so far back with such little success in arresting the slide, in part, by successfully encouraging new non-manufacturing economic endeavors, primarily tourism-oriented activities, attractions and ancillary businesses as well as agriculture and fishing.

When one looks at the numbers, the NMI's internally generated revenue in 1995 was $166.5 million (of which $13.9 million of the above was attributable to user fees)— compared with the NMI's current proposed 2008 budget of $169 million—by this measure the islands will have slipped back to a level experienced 12 years ago!

A review of visitor statistics for 2006 indicated 435,494 as being recorded. This is close to the 1991 level of visitor entries of 424,459—a benchmark achieved 15 years ago!

Currently visitor entries for the first three quarters in 2007 (most recent data available to me) recorded 294,640. This is very close to the full year total in 1989 of 302,179—18 years distant!

When potential investors, or their agents, examine the history of the tourism sector (which they do) and discover the above dismal decline and then evaluate the area's future growth potential in terms of making investment decisions they will certainly evaluate the visitor decline in their decision making process, as well as the apparent bail out from the islands of so many former Japanese investors.

What must they then think of the future investment potential in the NMI and the area in terms of long-term economic stability?

In my judgment these very real negative facts must be countered by a well-thought out investment generating, dynamic sales effort consisting of slide presentations, testimonials by current investors, prepaid invitational visits hosted by the government and possibly the Chamber, factual brochures, documented project proposals with adequate financial and marketing data presented and other positive promotional material—all designed to expose the islands in the very best of light.

I was particularly moved by an observation a businessman friend of mine shared upon returning to the island after an absence. It was as though he saw current conditions with fresh insight for the first time as he wondered "how anything so bad could happen to a place like Saipan."

As an observer and participant in the economy almost as long as anyone—perhaps longer than most, dating back 37 years—I am very much interested in seeing the island's economy recover and quickly. The islands have so much potential but fall so far short of achieving their full potential.

For purposes of providing a benchmark, let me take you on a brief journey back to a time when there was no economy worthy of the term. Then we'll fast-forward to a period which followed when the islands experienced a great economic "boom" only to later see much of it dissipated by just as rapid economic "bust." The following is presented to provide a measure of perspective between then and now.

In the late '60s and early '70s the single local bank in the NMI had only 4,016 accounts with aggregate savings of $562,000. The private sector consisted of 55 licensed business firms with total assets estimated at slightly less than $2 million. Only 957 privately owned vehicles were registered. The single credit union had a membership of 277 with total assets of $19,700. Rice was 11 cents per pound, sugar, 15 cents and gasoline 38 cents per gallon. The 1,056 employed indigenous workers in the islands had wages totaling $1.5 million annually. The resident population stood at 10,486 people. The Trust Territory Government with its large expatriate payroll was the major employer.

By the late summer of 1970 the islands were almost devoid of many of the amenities of the last quarter of the twentieth century. There was one black and white television channel available broadcasting only a few hours each evening; only three food stores of any size with a very limited inventory; one cargo vessel a month called at the port and there were no recreational craft in the lagoon except a single glass-bottom boat operated by Tetsu, a Palauan.

There were only two hotels, the 56-room Royal Taga Hotel where the World Resort Hotel now stands in Susupe and the Hafa Adai Hotel in Garapan which consisted of 10 plywood bungalows. The number of island restaurants could be counted on one hand. There were very few automobiles on the island and those consisted mostly of secondhand, rusted pickups. The Fire Department had a single red jeep and there was only one stop sign on Saipan's roadways. There were no traffic signals.

The airport was an open-air tin shack. The air strip was without a control tower or landing lights with only daytime flights available. The new jets entering island service had to overfly the field at a low altitude to frighten away any stray cattle that might have wandered onto the field, then circle back around for a landing. Continental Air Micronesia's DC-6 which was also in service carried their own mechanic on board.

It appeared in those days that the CNMI, like the economic basket cases elsewhere in Micronesia that were previously part of the Trust Territory, would forever remain a stagnate backwater entity doomed to remain on the federal dole.

To make an overseas telephone call one had to drive to the RCA office in Susupe. In those days of the Trust Territory Administration, Middle Road was a pot-holed, bone crushing, axle breaking, coral road with no more businesses along its perimeter than you could count on both hands. The same was true of the unpaved coral As Lito Road, which had less that a handful of structures, most of which were hidden behind weeds and brush and not visible from either side of the road.

If you were not on island in those days, don't be mislead based upon the above. It was a wonderful place and time; it still is.

Once Commonwealth status had been achieved conditions remained much the same. As late as 1980 the Commonwealth had no economy to speak of, indeed a very prominent businessman (Joe Screen of the J.C. Tenorio Enterprise) remarked to me that he thought the Commonwealth's economy "had a black hand over it."

It appeared in those days that the CNMI, like the economic basket cases elsewhere in Micronesia that were previously part of the Trust Territory, would forever remain a stagnate backwater entity doomed to remain on the federal dole.

Aside of the obvious handicaps of no natural mineral resources, a fragmented domestic market (three inhabited islands) and being an area subjected to the uncertainty of devastating typhoons, the islands of the Commonwealth had one other disadvantage which, like the others, remains to this day, and that is the handicap of a small indigenous population and thus a limited labor base. This single fact, unless it could somehow be overcome, would forever "cap" development and doom the islands to the 1980 level of under-development.

Then, in the mid-'80s, two fortuitous events occurred, more or less in tandem, which had the potential to significantly change the economy. One event was local, the other international:

- The CNMI abandoned the formerly restrictive, xenophobic Congress of Micronesia laws governing foreign investment and opened the economy to all investors;
- The United States government, at the Plaza Accords in New York, devalued the dollar in 1986 as related to the yen, which had the effect of providing the Japanese with a half-price sale on real estate and other assets. Japanese investment flooded the CNMI.

Everything was about to change.

With the above span of economic history as a point of departure, I have several observations I would like to share concerning present conditions as regards new foreign investment.

Back in the days of the late '60s and early '70s, long before the "economic boom" of the '85 -'86 period, there were few regulations directed toward business investment (those which had been promulgated by the Congress of Micronesia were tossed out in 1983 by the NMI). Afterward the area largely had a laissez faire attitude with few of its own business and investment rules and regulations. It might be said that the islands were so desirous of development and the foreign investors who could bring it about that the people were willing to play by the investor's rules and accommodate them with as little "red tape" as possible—and thus, meet the needs of their much sought after, "invited" investment capital.

The economic takeoff started around '85 - '86 with the economy growing so rapidly it soon achieved an average annual growth of 16 percent across all sectors. It was a time when many people became cautious of the unbridled growth and started to impose all manner of rules, regulations, permitting and licensing requirements, which probably had the effect of somewhat throttling additional investment—at least to a degree.

It was the period when the economy had been growing in such an uncontrolled manner that in 1991 the Chamber of Commerce organized an economic conference heralded as "Commonwealth 2000 - How Much Is Enough?" It was an attempt to look ahead nine years to the year 2000 and suggest ways to control the runaway growth which was adversely impacting the island's infrastructure, which was not designed to accommodate such pressure so quickly. It was a period when the growth experienced within a short period of less than six or seven years, under normal conditions would require 20 years or more to achieve. The alarm bells set off at the time heralding additional growth were based in part on MVB's erroneous projections of visitor growth which anticipated that more than one million visitors would be recorded at Commonwealth ports of entry by the year 2000.

Even so, by the late '90s the total reported business gross revenue was $2.6 billion; locally generated revenue was $242.6 million; hotels were averaging annual occupancies of 80 percent or more; visitor arrivals were 726,690 in '97, with estimated expenditures of $579 million and inflation was a negative 1.3 percent compared with the previous year. Many local millionaires were made within a short time through the leasing or their land.

However, there was an economic storm on the horizon and the economy was starting to cool—but few noticed. At the time the "Asian crisis" and the decline in visitor entries was unforeseen and unanticipated by most observers, including myself.

Buoyed by the unbridled and largely unrestricted growth of foreign and other investment, the NMI then hoped future investors would play by, adhere to, and accept more restrictive, newly promulgated NMI investment rules and regulations—and some did. But it soon became evident that few new (non-garment manufacturing) investors appeared to be interested. Some said the regulations that had been enacted appeared to many to be more anti-business than pro-business—a situation that many still believe prevails today. Aside from tax rebates few other investment incentives were offered—then as now.

To be continued.

Letter to the Editor

Zero accomplishments

For decades no administration seems to fully solve our CUC problems in both the power and water area. Hundreds of thousands if not millions of dollars have been spent on studies, consultants and RFPs, only to shut the doors and throw them away. Now, the Washington representative is mentioning about the age of those power generation engines, only to prove how negligent, stupid and incompetent previous administration were when it comes to this important issue.

Although I am not an expert in the area, common sense tells us that if we are to replace our aging generators with the same diesel fueled engines, we will continue to be dependent on Mobil and other oil companies. However, if we contact the alternative energy companies such as the wind turbine companies and solar energy companies to help us provide our energy needs, part of our problems would soften. Of course, it is very expensive at the start but it will help us break the chain on oil/fuel dependency. Imagine saving 20 to 30 years fuel cost by converting to solar power—that's how long a solar cell can last. Perhaps, maybe similar to wind turbine. Gentlemen, think, think, think! We have to stop the habit of spending too much and accomplishing nothing.

Francisco M. Atalig
Sinapalo 1, Rota

Sattelite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Partly sunny with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with a slight chance of showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with a slight chance of showers.	Partly cloudy with a slight chance of showers.	Partly cloudy with a slight chance of showers.
▲81° ▼75°	▲81° ▼75°	▲81° ▼75°	▲82° ▼75°	▲82° ▼75°

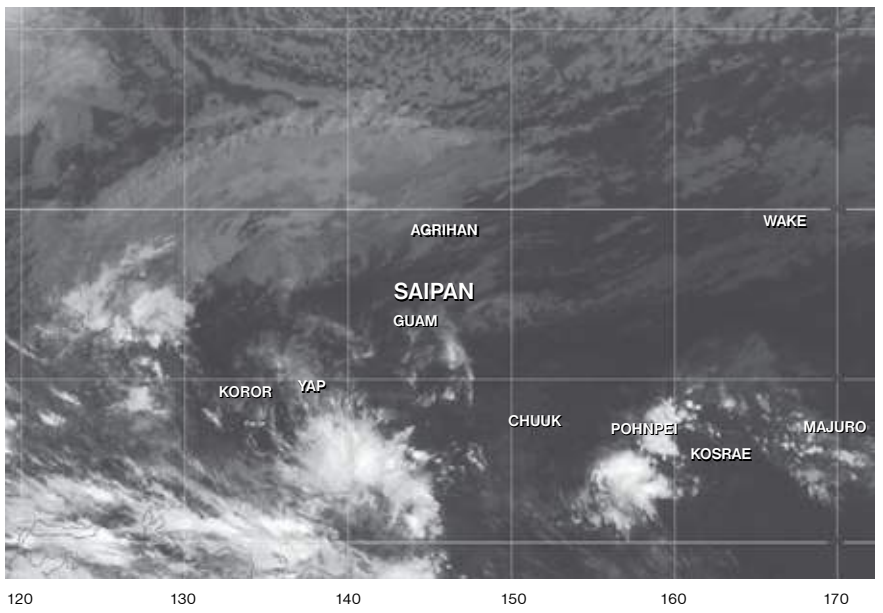
Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Cloudy	▲83	▼75
Palau	Partly Sunny	▲88	▼78
Yap	Mostly Sunny	▲87	▼77
Chuuk	Showers	▲87	▼77
Pohnpei	Rain	▲85	▼75
Kosrae	Mostly Sunny	▲89	▼78
Majuro	Cloudy	▲85	▼75

Around The Globe

Auckland	Partly Sunny	▲72	▼57
Beijing	Mostly Sunny	▲48	▼23
Hong Kong	Cloudy	▲70	▼59
Honolulu	Mostly Sunny	▲80	▼65
London	Mostly Sunny	▲53	▼37
Los Angeles	Cloudy	▲65	▼52
Manila	Showers	▲82	▼74
Melbourne	Sunny	▲89	▼74
Miami	Thunderstorms	▲77	▼63
New York	Partly Sunny	▲41	▼26
Osaka	Partly Sunny	▲43	▼30
Paris	Sunny	▲49	▼43
Pusan	Mostly Sunny	▲45	▼29
Rome	Sunny	▲55	▼35
Salem	Showers	▲50	▼38
San Francisco	Showers	▲58	▼48
Seoul	Mostly Sunny	▲41	▼27
Tokyo	Partly Sunny	▲49	▼34
Washington, DC	Partly Sunny	▲45	▼28

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, MONDAY, FEB. 18, 2008
Western North Pacific between Equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A weak cold front extends southwestward from 22N180 to 20N170E then continues as a shear line to near Wake Island at 19N167E to 16N160E to end at 13N147E. Scattered showers are occurring within 150 miles of the cold front boundary and within 80 miles of the shear line boundary. A shear line runs southwestward from 20N148E to 16N140E to beyond 130E at 15N. Extensive cloudiness and scattered showers are found along and up to 700 miles north of this boundary. An inverted trough south of Yap is associated with scattered showers and a few thunderstorms within 200 miles of a line from 8N137E to EQ143E. Another inverted trough near Pohnpei is triggering scattered showers and a few thunderstorms within 200 miles of a line from 8N158E to EQ158E. Trade-wind convergence is causing scattered showers near Kwajalein, Majuro and Kosrae within 180 miles of a line from 9N160E to 5N174E.

Tides

Saipan Harbor		
12:21AM Today	Low Tide:	0.4 Feet
07:38AM Today	High Tide:	1.8 Feet
12:52PM Today	Low Tide:	1.2 Feet
05:44PM Today	High Tide:	1.9 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:40AM	6:22PM
Wednesday	6:40AM	6:22PM
Thursday	6:39AM	6:22PM
Friday	6:39AM	6:23PM
Saturday	6:38AM	6:23PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	04:38PM	05:01AM
Wednesday	05:36PM	05:48AM
Thursday	06:30PM	06:30AM
Friday	07:21PM	07:08AM
Saturday	08:10PM	07:44AM

GET YOUR PICTURES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS PUBLISHED—FOR FREE

The *Saipan Tribune* accepts for FREE publication the following:

PICTURES

- ISLAND SNAPSHOTS
  Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.
- BIRTHDAY GREETINGS
  A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS
  Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMU'T SARI
  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- TRAVELOGUE
  Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- COMMUNITY BRIEFS
  Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

REQUIREMENTS

For pictures:

- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and a phone number.
- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

HOW TO SUBMIT

- E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com or jayvee_vallejera@saipantribune.com.
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- Mail: PMB 34, P.O. Box 10001, Saipan, CNMI 96950
- Drop off: 2nd Floor, CIC Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan
  To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

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- The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to accept or reject a contribution for publication; the right to edit all contributions, the date of publication, size of the picture, and page placement; and the right to publish contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats.
- The *Saipan Tribune* will decide how often community announcements are going to be published.
- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

CUSTOMER SERVICE For inquiries, purchase of back issues and complaints, call (670) 235-8747, 235-2440, fax 235-3740.

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ADVERTISING For inquiries contact (670) 235-2769. E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF FEBRUARY 15, 2008

DEPARTURES

Saipan-Rota			
CO 9313	8:30am	9:05am	3,4,7
Saipan-Guam			
CO9317	5:00am	5:50am	Daily
CO9597	8:30am	9:20am	1,2,5,6
CO9313	8:30am	10:00am	3,4,7 via Rota
CO9601	12:30pm	1:20pm	Daily
CO9603	3:30pm	4:20pm	Daily
CO9605	6:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
CO9599	9:30pm	10:20pm	Daily
Saipan-Narita			
NW 078	8:25am	1:30pm	Daily via Nagoya
NW 075	4:50pm	7:30pm	Daily
Saipan-Osaka			
NW 083	4:30pm	7:25pm	Daily
Saipan-Nagoya			
NW 078	8:25am	11:05am	Daily
Saipan-Manila			
CO 895	4:45pm	6:35pm	6
CO 895	6:45pm	8:35pm	3
Saipan-Seoul			
OZ 604	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ 604	2:40am	6:30am	2,3,4,5,6,7
OZ 606	3:30pm	7:00pm	2,4,6,7
Saipan-Busan			
OZ 608	4:00am	7:35am	1,4,5,7
Saipan-Guanzhou			
CZ 3008	5:00am	8:00am	2,6
Saipan-Shanghai			
MU 590	4:20am	7:00am	2,6
Guam-Manila			
CO 891	6:00am	10:30am	3 via Yap and Koror
CO 893	6:30am	8:05am	6
CO 893	8:25am	10:00am	2,7
CO 893	5:50pm	9:10pm	5 via Koror
CO 933	8:00pm	9:40pm	Daily
PR 111	6:00am	7:45am	1,2,4,6,7
Guam-Hongkong			
CO 909	7:45pm	10:40pm	1,5
Guam-Rota			
CO 9598	10:15am	10:45am	1,2,6

ARRIVALS

Rota-Saipan			
CO 9598	11:10am	11:45am	1,2,6
Guam-Saipan			
CO 9316	2:30am	3:20am	Daily
CO9596	7:00am	7:50am	Daily
CO9598	10:15am	11:45am	1,2,6 via Rota
CO9600	10:45am	11:35am	3,4,5,7
CO9602	2:00pm	2:50pm	Daily
CO9604	5:00pm	5:50pm	Daily
CO9606	8:00pm	8:50pm	Daily
Narita-Saipan			
NW 076	10:35am	3:05pm	Daily
NW 077	6:15pm	1:10am+1	Daily via Nagoya
Osaka-Saipan			
NW 084	10:40am	3:10pm	Daily
Nagoya-Saipan			
NW 077	8:45pm	1:10am+1	Daily
Manila-Saipan			
CO 890	9:15am	2:55pm	6
CO 890	11:45am	5:35pm	3
Seoul-Saipan			
OZ 605	9:00am	2:30pm	2,4,6,7
OZ 603	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
OZ 603	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1,2,3,4,5,6
Busan-Saipan			
OZ 607	9:30pm	2:50am+1	3,4,6,7
Guanzhou-Saipan			
CZ 3007	8:00pm	4:00am+1	1,5
Shanghai-Saipan			
MU 589	8:05pm	3:00am+1	1,5
Manila-Guam			
CO 894	11:20am	4:55pm	2,7
CO 894	7:45pm	1:20am+1	6
CO 892	9:45pm	5:25am+1	3 via Koror
CO 892	9:45pm	6:30am+1	3 via Koror and Yap
CO 892	10:10pm	5:30am+1	5 via Koror
CO 934	11:10pm	4:40am+1	Daily
PR 110	10:15pm	4:00am+1	1,3,5,6,7
Hongkong-Guam			
CO 910	11:40pm	6:20am+1	1,5
Rota-Guam			
CO 9313	9:30am	10:00am	3,4,7

Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CO: Continental; PR: Philippine Airlines; CZ: China Southern; CA: Air China; NW: Northwest; JO: Japan Airlines; OZ: Asiana; MU: China Eastern ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota			
FRE 100	7:00am	7:30am	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 100	7:50am	8:20am	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 200	9:00am	9:30am	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 200	9:50am	10:15am	Daily
Guam-Rota			
FRE 300	4:00pm	4:30pm	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 300	4:50pm	5:25pm	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 400	6:00pm	6:30pm	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 400	6:45pm	7:15pm	Daily
Saipan-Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45am	6:55am	Daily
FRE 103	7:30am	7:40am	Daily
FRE 105	8:00am	8:10am	Daily
FRE 107	8:40am	8:50am	Daily
FRE 109*	9:10am	9:20am	Daily
FRE 111*	10:45am	10:55am	Daily
FRE 113	11:40am	11:50am	Daily
FRE 115	1:00pm	1:10pm	Daily
FRE 117	2:30pm	2:40pm	Daily
FRE 119	4:00pm	4:10pm	Daily
FRE 121	4:40pm	4:50pm	Daily
FRE 123 *	5:40pm	5:50pm	Daily
FRE 125 *	6:00pm	6:10pm	Daily
Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**			
FRE 102	7:05am	7:15am	Daily
FRE 104	7:50am	8:00am	Daily
FRE 106**	8:20am	8:30am	Daily
FRE 108**	9:00am	9:10am	Daily
FRE 110	10:00am	10:10am	Daily
FRE 112	11:05am	11:15am	Daily
FRE 114	12:00pm	12:10pm	Daily
FRE 116	1:30pm	1:40pm	Daily
FRE 118	2:50pm	3:00pm	Daily
FRE 120**	4:20pm	4:30pm	Daily
FRE 122**	5:00pm	5:10pm	Daily
FRE 124	6:05pm	6:15pm	Daily
FRE 126	6:20pm	6:30pm	Daily

Letters to the Editor

Answer to 'Search for a better life'

I do not know the ex-insular autonomous absentee gentleman, Mr. William "Bamboo" McCue, personally, but the latest episode of dismissive, ignorant, legalistically misconstrued tripe, "Search for a Better Life," he spewed most recently onto the pages of this same forum deserves appropriate confutation. But first, lest anyone take immediate offense at my terminology, I must explain that my use of the word "ignorant" implies no insult to Mr. McCue. He most likely will derive enjoyment from my use of the word, since he himself appears to enjoy free use the word in his own writing (see his latest letter to the editor).

To the point, I wish to remind Mr. McCue and the readership of what he apparently has failed to consider (either ignorantly or by neglect), that the beauty and advantage of dwelling legally on American soil is that the bargain, the compact, the terms of occupancy, the conditions of governance are always open to re-negotiation under the principles of the American system of government. Not only do the values of human rights and human dignity embodied in the American system of government allow continuous reassessment of political conditions, they virtually require it.

The U.S. Constitution itself is constructed so that it may be modified... and so it has been 27 times since its inception with 26 of the amendments currently in force. The nonresident workers of the Marianas have every right... EVERY RIGHT!... along with the citizens who agree with them to seek redress of grievances and to pursue and to advocate political change under U.S. law and within the codified premises of the Constitution of the United States of America. It is also true that the events of history (wars, sale and purchases of territories, treaties, alliances and covenants, etc.) change political and social realities making periodic reassessment of laws not only useful but also necessary and wise.

The events that shaped the emergence of a thriving USA was triggered when foreigners (just ask the Native Americans) arrived in North America. Later, in the 18th and 19th centuries, the events that defined and created a new, dynamic nation unfolded with the Revolutionary War and the subsequent imposition of Manifest Destiny. Like it or not, right or wrong, it happened that way and a developing (albeit imperfect and sometimes ignoble) political order was established.

And so it has also been for the Mariana Islands. The CNMI of today is not the CNMI of ancient history, nor is it even the CNMI of 20 years ago. The circumstances that began unfolding in 1521 and later changed direction with the Spanish transfer of the islands to Germany in 1899, the secession of the islands to Japan in 1914 and, most dramatically, with the events commencing on June 15, 1944 onward through to the ratification of the CNMI Covenant with the United States of America in 1976, have sequentially, substantially and irreversibly reshaped the political reality and the evolving moral mandate on these islands.

It is good that old cultures be preserved. It is good that ethnic identities support peoples' pride in themselves. But an evolution of progressive political thinking and values will be required if the CNMI is to prosper and interact in workable harmony with its parent nation and with the greater world community. The enduring truth, and right to attempt to alter the political status quo, expressed in the following words—written exactly 200 years prior to the signing of the CNMI covenant with The United States—represent the principle that is the justifiable best hope for future prosperity and harmony for ALL the people of the Marianas: indigenous, fellow non-native citizens and resident workers alike. Those words are:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness."—from the Declaration of Independence July 4, 1776.

That is to say, to seek improved political and legal status that elevates peoples' lives and that stabilizes a society, even to demand those changes with militancy if necessary, is fair, right and proper when circumstance warrant under the American flag. To oppose or to seek to abrogate this right against anyone who legitimately resides in, and whose interests are congruent with the interests of any part of, this nation is to challenge the grand ideals of true Americanism.

To call for righteous change of policy and improved political status on American soil, much as Thomas Paine (a foreign Englishman), Thomas Jefferson, John Brown, Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr. (among others) have done before, IS the American way.

Mr. McCue and other of the same politically unsophisticated regressive bent may turn their blind eyes away if they like, but I dutifully remind them that if they look out their local windows they will see one flag flying highest on the standard. It is the American flag. And it represents the finest promise for, if not yet the fully realized, practical human and political ideals conceived in the history of man. The implications of that fact are obvious, numerous, profound, and certain... not only for Mr. McCue, but also for every soul whose feet touch these islands. If the validity of these points is lost on Mr. McCue or if he finds their truth unpalatable, I also remind him that he is himself free to attempt to emigrate, as he suggests to others he considers to be unjustifiably disaffected with their political and social stations in the CNMI, "to China, Palau, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, India, Germany or really any other place instead of" the United States of America.

Kenneth Hodson O'Harnett
As Perdido, Saipan

Using 'spin' to argue vs minimum wage hike

The CNMI got a 50-cent raise in minimum wage (to $3.55) last July 2007, and is set to have another 50-cent raise (to $4.05) this May 26, 2008.

The Fitial administration is trying to stop this next incremental raise, and all future scheduled raises (50 cents each year through 2015, until we reach $7.25, which will be the minimum wage in the U.S. set for year 2009). This does not surprise me. This administration lobbied heavily against the first increase, and effectively insisted on having the minimum wage law include requirements for a study by the Department of Labor on the effect of the raises.

And our Governor is not alone—the representative to the U.S. Congress from American Samoa has introduced a bill to stop the incremental minimum wage increases, which also apply to them.

The U.S. Department of Labor issued its report in January 2008, and the *Tribune* and *Variety* have each reported that Governor Fitial or his spokespeople say how this report completely vindicates their argument that raising minimum wage in the CNMI is harmful to our economy.

I've read the entire report by the U.S. Department of Labor. It has comments that can be used by either side in the debate about minimum wage. But mostly, it is a lot of wasted paper and a load of waffle.

CNMI Governor Fitial is using the age-old practice of "spin" to argue against the next scheduled minimum wage hike. The spin includes 1) distortions of what the DOL report actually says, 2) sweeping statements about what people in the CNMI think about raising minimum wage, and 3) mischaracterization of the report as reaching a conclusion against implementation of the next minimum wage increase.

1. According to the news articles covering the Fitial Administration's position, "Increasing the CNMI wage to $7.25 an hour, the report said, is comparable to raising the U.S. minimum wage to $16.50 an hour." This statement distorts the truth by omitting the real content and context of what is said. It is NOT TRUE, and does not support suspending the next scheduled minimum wage increase.

First of all, the report actually says "The scheduled increase in the minimum wage to $7.25 (by 2015) will likely affect at least 75 percent of wage and salary workers in the CNMI. By comparison, in order to directly affect 75 percent of U.S. hourly workers, the minimum wage would need to be raised to $16.50, the 75th percentile mark for wage and salary workers who are paid hourly rates."

What this means is that the CNMI has a much larger segment of its working population suffering from the low minimum wage than the U.S. does. In the U.S., minimum wage is truly a "floor" and many workers obviously earn more than the minimum, which is why it would take such a much larger increase to effect 75 percent of them. This is not an argument AGAINST raising minimum wage here, but only highlights the urgency and desperation of why we need these incremental raises.

Second of all, on this point, the report is comparing apples and oranges—or really today and many years hence. The CNMI is not facing a raise to $7.25 this year. We are facing a raise to $4.05 this May. Nothing in the report tells us what that is comparable to in the U.S. Nothing discusses what minimum wage can buy in the CNMI for the average worker, what our cost-of-living is, and how that compares to the U.S. minimum wage earner's lifestyle.

2. The governor reports a "broad consensus" against raising the minimum wage to the next level here. Jeff Flores has already spoken out in a letter to the editors of our newspapers that he disagrees, and doesn't believe people here are uniformly against raising minimum wage. Rod Hodges has written against it. Others have questioned the governor's position. I, too, am not part of that alleged consensus. I can't believe that any person here earning minimum wage is against a wage hike this May to $4.05 per hour.

It's time to show that our Governor is misstating the facts about what the people in the CNMI want. Every worker here who earns a minimum wage of $3.55 who is in favor of raising their minimum wage to $4.05 can contact Mr. George Miller or any of the representatives on the House Committee on Education and Labor. Any other person, whether you earn minimum wage or not, who feels it's important to raise the CNMI minimum wage to $4.05 this May, can also express your views to the committee members. You can see the full committee roster online. Or you can just write or call: Democratic Staff, 2181 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515, (202-225-3725).

3. The DOL report includes statements about the past that are informative, but nothing it says about the present effect of the minimum wage here or the likely effect another raise may have is at all reliable. The report itself denies reliability.

It notes that there are many adverse economic factors. In discussing the garment industry, the report says that lack of data make it impossible to distinguish among the various adverse factors as to which are having the greatest impact. (page 31). Obviously, the loss of special status and the opening up of the market to other global economies is a very significant consideration, and one, I think, that is more likely to have dictated the pullout of our garment industry than the small wage hike.

Also, although the report paints a bleak picture and talks about how difficult having a raise in minimum wage is when times are tough, it suggests that the tourism industry may rebound. The report makes no mention of the likely positive, indirect, impact that the military buildup in Guam will have on the CNMI economy. If the DOL had applied its own logic with these considerations in mind, it might have suggested that there will be room in the CNMI's economy for absorbing the impact of the minimum wage hike.

But most telling in the report is this: "The CNMI does not yet have in place macroeconomic data collection and accounting-systems technology capable of generating information on total output and its components on a monthly or quarterly basis. As a result, there is not a way to provide objective measures of productive capacity, capacity utilization, employment, wages or unemployment rates. ...In the absence of complete and accurate macroeconomic data, there is no objective method to gauge the level of aggregate economic activity, the level of employment it supports, or other important measures such as total personal income, consumption, savings and other metrics that explain the well-being of the population and the average citizen. ...The lack of such data are especially a barrier to assessing the current and future impact of the recent and scheduled increases in the minimum wage."

In other words--they're just guessing, and can't say anything objective about the actual impact of the small minimum wage increase we've had, or the impact of the next anticipated wage increase.

The Fitial Administration's spin is nothing but more twist against what is fair and just—a living wage for workers.

Jane Mack
San Vicente, Saipan

A finger in the pie

Mr. McCue, I will readily admit to an ignorant turn of phrase. For that I apologize. It does not change the fact that if a local cannot have his finger in the pie, no one gets a finger in the pie. Pacific Islanders are 30 percent of the population, yet they seem to want 100 percent of everything. How many living wage government jobs are filled by non-locals? How many $3.55 an hour jobs are filled by locals? Has local control of *anything* improved life in the NMI for anyone but locals employed by the government? Why should immigration be different here than on the mainland? Why should the minimum wage here be any different than on the mainland? Mostly because our government, in concert with business owners, want it that way. As an aside, Mr. Cruz, to say that TaoTao Tano, is not racist, and welcomes everyone, then use the term haole, is wrong.

Paul Harsany
Garapan, Saipan

Business

3 top-notch Guam realtors honored

The Gine Fli'e I Tano Realtor Awards Program is an annual event that recognizes excellence in Guam's real estate industry.

It is sponsored by First Hawaiian Bank, *Pacific Daily News* and the Guam Association of Realtors.

This year's winners of the Realtors Awards Program were Yumiko Blaisus of Macks Realty, Outstanding Newcomer; Tom Godwin of Today's Realty, Realtors'® Choice; and Neri Blas of BHI Realty, Island Homes People's Choice Award.

The winners were announced on Feb. 7 at the annual Gine Fli'e Tano Cocktail Reception hosted by First Hawaiian Bank. ***(PR)***

Front row, from left, are Stephen Niu, president-elect, Guam Association of Realtors; Peggy Araullo Llagas, executive officer, Guam Association of Realtors; Laura-Lynn V. Dacanay, senior vice president/Guam and CNMI Region Manager, First Hawaiian Bank; Yumiko Blaisus of Macks Realty and Outstanding Newcomer Award winner; and Jason Sakazaki, Market Development director, *Pacific Daily News*.

Front row, from left, are: Laura-Lynn V. Dacanay, senior vice president/Guam and CNMI Region manager, First Hawaiian Bank; Tom Godwin of Today's Realty and Realtors'® Choice Award winner; and Peggy Araullo Llagas, executive officer, Guam Association of Realtors. Back row, from left, are Stephen Niu, president-elect, Guam Association of Realtors; and Jason Sakazaki, Market Development director, *Pacific Daily News*.

Front row, from left, are: Laura-Lynn V. Dacanay, senior vice president/Guam and CNMI Region manager, First Hawaiian Bank; Peggy Araullo Llagas, executive officer, Guam Association of Realtors; and Neri Blas of BHI Realty and Island Homes People's Choice Award winner. Back row, from left, are Stephen Niu, president-elect, Guam Association of Realtors; and Jason Sakazaki, Market Development director, *Pacific Daily News*.

Economic woes reveal a long-felt unease

By ADAM GELLER
AP NATIONAL WRITER

Even when experts were declaring the economy healthy, many Americans voiced a vague, but persistent dissatisfaction. True, jobs were relatively plentiful over the last few years. It was easy to borrow and very cheap. The sharp rise in the value of homes and plentiful credit cards encouraged a nation of consumers to get out and buy. But to many people, something didn't feel right, even if they couldn't quite explain why.

Now the economic tide is receding, and the undertow that was there all along is getting stronger.

Take away the easy credit and consumers are left with paychecks that, for most, haven't nearly kept pace with their need and propensity to spend.

The frustration of $3 gas and $4 milk, the worries about health care costs that have risen four times the rate of pay, become much more real. The retirement security that is only as good as the increasingly volatile stock market seems much less certain.

Americans' declining confidence in their economy is triggered by a storm of very recent pressures, including plunging home prices, tightening credit, and heavy debt. But it is compounded by anxiety that was there all along, the result of a long, slow drip of worries and vulnerabilities.

"The economy is currently in recession or arguably close to recession and that's certainly weighing on the collective psyche," says Mark Zandi, chief economist of forecaster Moody's Economy.com. "But ... I do think there is an increasing level of angst that is more fundamental and is not going to go away even when the economy improves."

AP

Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson gives his assessment of the economy while testifying on Capitol Hill in Washington, Wednesday, Feb. 13, 2008, before the House Budget Committee.

Much of that anxiety is the uncomfortable, but expected jolt of the economic roller coaster. During a downturn, people become less confident about keeping their jobs or being able to find new ones, meeting household expenses and about the prospects for the future.

But there may be more to it than just cyclical ups and downs.

What does the economic future hold? Many Americans feel increasingly unable to answer that question with assurance, and they appraise it with a sense that they are less in control of the outcome.

In Westminster, Colo., a Denver suburb, George Apodaca hears that uncertainty from the maintenance workers, drivers and others enrolled in the home budgeting class he teaches. Most have steady jobs, but are just getting by. They talk about challenges like the rising cost of getting to work or medical bills, not as new problems but as a continuing struggle.

"People in my class, they don't know what a recession means or what a boom means," says Apodaca, a counselor for Colorado Housing Enterprises. "They're worried about buying the groceries, buying the gas."

A year ago - months before economic alarms went off - nearly two of three Americans polled by The Rockefeller Foundation said that they felt somewhat or a lot less economically secure then they did a decade ago. Half said they expected their children to face an economy even more shaky.

Other polls have registered similar unease in the past few years, showing large numbers of Americans dissatisfied with the economy, and worried about retirement security, health care costs, and a declining standard of living.

USDA orders nation's largest beef recall

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The U.S. Department of Agriculture on Sunday ordered the recall of 143 million pounds of frozen beef from a California slaughterhouse, the subject of an animal-abuse investigation, that provided meat to school lunch programs.

Officials said it was the largest beef recall in the United States, surpassing a 1999 ban of 35 million pounds of ready-to-eat meats. No illnesses have been linked to the newly recalled meat, and officials said the health threat was likely small.

The recall will affect beef products dating to Feb. 1, 2006, that came from Chino-based Westland/Hallmark Meat Co., the federal agency said.

Secretary of Agriculture Ed Schafer said his department has evidence that Westland did not routinely contact its veterinarian when cattle became non-ambulatory after passing inspection, violating health regulations.

"Because the cattle did not receive complete and proper inspection, Food Safety and Inspection Service has determined them to be unfit for human food and the company is conducting a recall," Schafer said in a statement.

A phone message left for Westland president Steve Mendell was not immediately returned.

Federal officials suspended operations at Westland/Hallmark after an undercover video from the Humane Society of the United States surfaced showing crippled and sick animals being shoved with forklifts.

Two former employees were charged Friday.

Officials estimate that about 37 million pounds of the recalled beef went to school programs, but they believe most of the meat probably has already been eaten.

Stock Portfolio

ASIAN MARKETS

AUSTRALIA
5,634.000
Down 45.800
(-0.81%)

HONG KONG
23,930.09
Down 218.34
(-0.90%)

JAKARTA
2,705.0979
Up 16.907
(+0.63%)

TOKYO
13,669.94
Up 47.38
(+0.35%)

K. LUMPUR
1,427.19
Down 8.91
(-0.62%)

MANILA
3,223.35
Up 22.45
(+0.70%)

SINGAPORE
3,080.11
Down 8.57
(-0.28%)

SEOUL
1,697.05
Up 2.28
(+0.13%)

BANGKOK
829.93
Up 3.28
(+0.40%)

LEADING INDICATORS

DOW
12,348.21
-28.77

NASDAQ
2,321.80
-10.74

S&P
1,349.99
+1.13

MONEY MARKET

Australian Dollar	1.0957
British Pound	0.5095
Canadian Dollar	1.0062
Chinese Renmbi	7.1656
Euro	0.6811
Hong Kong Dollar	7.8008
Indian Rupee	39.667
Indonesian Rupiah	9142
Japanese Yen	107.81
Malaysian Ringgit	3.2208
New Zealand Dollar	1.2606
Philippine Peso	40.645
Singapore Dollar	1.4115
South Korean Won	945.4
Swiss Franc	1.0939
Taiwan Dollar	31.736
Thailand Baht	31.59

In U.S. dollar terms

Source: Associated Press

Nation

Damaging tornadoes reported in South

PRATTVILLE, Ala. (AP)—Severe weather howled through much of the nation Sunday, producing damaging tornadoes in the South that injured nearly 30 people and treating winter-weary parts of the Midwest to freezing rain, snow and flooding.

A tornado damaged or destroyed about 200 homes and businesses in Prattville, outside Montgomery, where Mayor Jim Byard said crews searched for people trapped in the wreckage.

No fatalities were immediately reported, but two people were critically injured, said Fire Department official Dallis Johnson. Twenty-seven people had minor injuries, officials said.

"It's very possible we may have more injuries," he said, saying that some trapped people had been rescued.

A 35-bed mobile hospital unit was set up outside a Kmart to treat victims with minor to moderate injuries so that hospitals could take those with serious injuries, Dr. Steve Allen said.

Toppled utility poles and storm debris littered the area, northwest of Montgomery about 5 miles off Interstate 65. Shelters opened at churches, and school buses shuttled storm victims out of the stricken area to the city center.

AP

Debris from several homes lies scattered in the neighborhood behind K-Mart on Cobbs Ford Road in Prattville, Ala. after severe storms and a tornado damaged parts of the city Sunday, Feb. 17, 2008.

David Shoupe, 18, assistant manager at Palm Beach Tan, said he and a co-worker barely made it into a laundry room before the roof fell in and the wind tossed shopping carts aloft.

"Soon as we turned the corner, the roof collapsed everywhere except the laundry room," Shoupe said, standing beside his white Lexus, with a front windshield cracked by debris and the other windows shattered.

Obama and Edwards meet in NC, no nod yet

CHICAGO (AP)—Barack Obama sneaked down to North Carolina Sunday and met with former rival John Edwards, who has yet to make an endorsement in the race for the Democratic presidential nomination.

Officials at North Carolina television station WTVD said they have video taken from a helicopter of Obama leaving Edwards' home in Chapel Hill. A producer said the station was "tipped off" about the meeting, but said the source was confidential.

Edwards

Obama

The Obama campaign confirmed the meeting. Although reporters normally travel everywhere with Obama, he left them behind to fly down in secret from his hometown.

"Senator Obama visited this morning with John and Elizabeth Edwards at their home in Chapel Hill to discuss the state of the campaign and the pressing issues facing American families," said Obama spokesman Bill Burton. He wouldn't comment on the possibility of an endorsement.

In an interview Sunday night with WITI-TV in Milwaukee, Obama said, "The meeting with John, we just wanted to talk about how we can move the party in a direction that focuses on middle-class issues—relieving poverty, reducing the influence of special interests in Washington."

People close to the Edwardses, speaking privately, say they have been torn about whom to support. The former North Carolina senator is concerned that Obama may not be ready for the presidency and that his health care plan is inferior. But Edwards was highly critical of Clinton—her policies, her ties to special interests and her character—during his campaign, making it more difficult to support her now.

The couple has been impressed with Clinton, who has more effectively courted them since the 2004 vice presidential nominee dropped out, people who talk to the Edwardses say. Obama has been less attentive, they say, and some of those close to the Edwardses have been annoyed that Obama has continued to ridicule him for once saying his biggest weakness is that he has a powerful response to seeing pain in others.

Gunman called girlfriend to say goodbye

WONDER LAKE, Ill. (AP)—The girlfriend of the man who killed five people and himself at Northern Illinois University said Sunday that he called her early on Valentine's Day, the day of the shooting, to say goodbye.

Steven Kazmierczak "called me at midnight and told me not to forget about him," Jessica Baty, 28, told CNN from her home. She said she had no indication he was planning anything.

Investigators still haven't determined why Kazmierczak, 27, opened fire in a lecture hall at his and Baty's alma mater, and she shed no light on a motive Sunday.

"The person I knew was not the one who went into Cole Hall and did that," Baty told CNN. "He was anything but a monster. He was probably the ... nicest, (most) caring person ever."

The day of the shooting or the day after, Baty received a package from Kazmierczak containing two textbooks, a cell phone and what she characterized as a "goodbye note."

"You've done so much for me," the note said, according to Baty. "You will make an excellent psychologist and social worker someday."

Another package contained a gun holster and ammunition. She confirmed that he had stopped taking an antidepressant about three weeks ago because "it made him feel like a zombie," but she denied that his recent behavior was unusual.

"He wasn't erratic. He wasn't delusional. He was Steve; he was normal," said Baty, who had turned down Associated Press requests by phone and in person for an interview.

Authorities have speculated that the couple might have split up just before the shooting. CNN said that during the interview televised Sunday, Baty described an on-off relationship and said she and Kazmierczak most recently had been living together.

AP

Jessica Baty, former girlfriend of Steven Kazmierczak, talks to reporters outside her parents home in Wonder Lake, Ill., on Sunday, Feb. 17, 2008.

Chicago's suburbs grieve NIU victims

CICERO, Ill. (AP)—The sprawling Chicago suburbs that send their sons and daughters to Northern Illinois University struggled Sunday with the closeness of the country's latest massacre - this time the gunman grew up among them.

The tragedy hung over church services throughout the region, from the university's home in DeKalb on Chicago's western exurban edge, to Elk Grove Village, where the gunman grew up in what one resident called "Mayberry," to blue-collar Cicero bordering Chicago.

Parishioners at Our Lady of the Mount Catholic Church in Cicero prepared for the funeral of Catalina Garcia, the youngest of four children of parents originally from Guadalajara, Mexico. They're longtime parishioners at Our Lady of the Mount, a tight-knit group of low- and middle-income families, many of them young, with some older Czech and other immigrants.

"Their parents are making all sorts of sacrifices to make sure the kids get into colleges. They're selling things, they're taking out second mortgages on their homes," the Rev. Lawrence Collins said at the church.

Garcia, 20, followed a brother, Jaime, to NIU, choice of many working-class Chicago-area families. She was studying to be a teacher and had talked about returning to Cicero to teach first grade.

ACROSS THE NATION

Nancy Reagan hospitalized after falling

SANTA MONICA, Calif. (AP)—Former first lady Nancy Reagan was hospitalized Sunday after falling in her home in Bel-Air but is doing well, her spokeswoman said. Reagan, 86, was taken to St. John's Health Center, where doctors determined she did not break a hip as feared, spokeswoman Joanne Drake said. Drake said Reagan was doing well and would stay the night in the same room where former President Ronald Reagan stayed after he broke his hip at home in 2001. He died June 5, 2004. The former first lady is "joking and visiting in her room," Drake said. Reagan's family physician recommended the overnight stay "as a precaution," Drake said. Nancy Reagan's last major public appearance was at the Jan. 30 Republican presidential debate at the Reagan Library in Simi Valley, Calif., where she sat with Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Musical memorial proposed for RI fire

WEST WARWICK, R.I. (AP)—The wind would strum a 100-string harp in a memorial that was proposed Sunday as hundreds of people gathered to mark the fifth anniversary of one of the nation's deadliest fires. Survivors and relatives of the 100 people killed huddled next to a memorial of crosses and photographs on the grounds of The Station nightclub, with some wearing shirts bearing their loved one's picture and crying softly as the name of each person killed was read aloud. The fire erupted Feb. 20, 2003, when the tour manager for the 1980s rock band Great White set off pyrotechnics at the start of a concert at The Station. Sparks ignited flammable soundproofing foam on the walls and ceiling, engulfing the one-story building in flames and toxic smoke and trapping concertgoers inside.

Man arraigned in NYC therapist slaying

NEW YORK (AP)—A man accused of hacking a Manhattan therapist to death rambled and appeared agitated during his arraignment Sunday before the judge ordered him to undergo a psychiatric evaluation. David Tarloff, 39, was arraigned on charges of second-degree murder, second-degree attempted murder and first-degree assault. He claimed that his court-appointed lawyer, Reginald Sharpe, was "not an attorney." Acting Supreme Court Justice Ruth Pickholz ordered that Tarloff have a psychiatric evaluation before being brought back to court Feb. 23. Tarloff was arrested Saturday after investigators matched his palm prints with those at the bloody scene where therapist Kathryn Faughey was killed Tuesday evening. Police said his prints were found on a suitcase - filled with adult diapers and women's clothing - left near the basement door where the killer escaped.

Sugar refinery had prior dust explosion

SAVANNAH, Ga. (AP)—Dust that collected in a piece of safety equipment caused a small explosion at a sugar refinery weeks before the deadly blast that killed nine workers, a federal investigator said Sunday. Stephen Selk, investigations manager for the U.S. Chemical Safety Board, had few details about the previous explosion at the Imperial Sugar refinery in Port Wentworth. He could not say whether the earlier blast contributed to the massive explosion Feb. 7. "It is far too early to reach conclusions about the relationship between that event and this one," Selk said. No one was injured in the earlier explosion, said Selk, who did not know the exact date.

Asia

Pakistan holds crucial elections

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan (AP)—Pakistanis voted Monday for a new parliament in elections shadowed by fears of violence and questions about the political survival of President Pervez Musharraf - America's key ally in the war on terror.

The vote was delayed six weeks after former prime minister Benazir Bhutto was assassinated on Dec. 27, and polls opened Monday amid tight security.

"We pray to God that there is peace," said Kanwar Mohammed Dilshad, deputy chief of the Election Commission. "We pray for record turnout."

The start of voting was slow in major cities such as Islamabad and Lahore. But 10 men stood in line at a polling station early Monday in Nawab Shah, the southern hometown of Bhutto's widower, who is now the leader of her Pakistan Peoples Party.

"My vote is for the PPP," said Munir Ahmed Tariq, a retired police officer. "If there is rigging this time, there will be a severe reaction. This is a sentiment of this nation."

The outcome remained tough to call because of the scarcity of reliable polls, but Musharraf, who was re-elected last October to a new five-year term, faces growing public anger over his moves last year to declare emergency rule, purge the judiciary and curb independent media. An overwhelming victory by the opposition would leave him politically vulnerable, even at risk of impeachment.

Former RP officials call for Cabinet's resignation

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—More than 50 former Philippine officials called for President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's Cabinet to resign, stoking political turbulence amid corruption allegations that have battered her presidency.

The officials from previous administrations, including former Arroyo Cabinet members, made the public appeal Sunday after attending a Mass led by Roman Catholic groups and ex-President Corazon Aquino to show support for a star witness in a new corruption scandal. At least 3,000 protesters attended the Mass at a Catholic university in suburban Manila.

About 10,000 protesters jammed the main avenue in Manila's financial district Friday in an opposition-led rally to demand Arroyo's resignation.

In a statement read by a former Philippine ambassador to Washington, Albert del Rosario, the group called on current officials "who can no longer endure this wrongful governance" to quit Arroyo's administration. They also urged officials with knowledge of any government wrongdoing to emulate Rodolfo "Jun" Lozada Jr.

Lozada, a government consultant, publicly exposed alleged large-scale bribery in a $330 million (€225 million) government broadband contract being investigated by the opposition-dominated Senate.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Chinese vessels sinks in northern RP, 28 missing

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—A Chinese vessel sank in the northern Philippines, and 28 crew members were reported missing, a coast guard spokesman said Monday. The M/V Jinshan had passed a lighthouse at Cape Bojeador in Ilocos Norte province when it developed problems and sank late Sunday, coast guard spokesman Lt. Cmdr. Armand Balilo said. He said the Philippines received a request for assistance from the China Maritime Rescue Coordinating Center and sent a search vessel 110 kilometers (70 miles) north of Cape Bojeador into the South China Sea to look for the missing crewmen.

China concerned about US satellite plans

BEIJING (AP)—China said Sunday it was concerned about U.S. military plans to shoot down a damaged spy satellite that is hurtling toward Earth with 1,000 pounds of toxic fuel. The U.S. military has said it hopes to smash the satellite as soon as next week—just before it enters Earth's atmosphere—with a single missile fired from a Navy cruiser in the northern Pacific Ocean. The official Xinhua News Agency quoted Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao as saying the Chinese government was monitoring the situation and has urged the U.S. to avoid causing damages to security in outer space and in other countries. Russia also has voiced worries about the U.S. plan to shoot down the damaged satellite, saying it may be a veiled test of America's missile defense system.

Land mine blast kills 4 Pakistan troops

QUETTA, Pakistan (AP)—A military pickup truck struck a land mine that killed four troops and wounded two others Sunday in Pakistan's insurgency-hit southwest, police said. A rebel group claimed responsibility for the attack. The explosion occurred along a dirt road in Baluchistan province near the tribal town of Dera Bugti, where the troops were on a routine security patrol guarding a gas well, said local police chief Najmuddin Tareen. The pickup was carrying seven troops when it hit the land mine, triggering an explosion that killed four of them at the scene. Two others were wounded, one seriously, Tareen said. A little-known insurgent group called the Baluch Republican Army claimed responsibility for the attack.

East Timor struggling through infancy

DILI, East Timor (AP)—This tiny nation declared independence six years ago after centuries of harsh foreign rule and conflict, its people dreaming of a life of peaceful self-determination. The infant democracy was thrust back into upheaval when rebels attacked its newly elected leaders last Monday. The assassination attempts on President Jose Ramos-Horta and Prime Minister Xanana Gusmaoa were stark reminders that it may be years before stability takes hold in a territory where militants are supported by many in the public. The setback is part of East Timor's struggle for democracy after more than four centuries as a Portuguese colony and 24 years of Indonesian occupation. It occurred despite intensive U.N.-led efforts to nurture the newly independent nation.

Up to 80 killed in Afghan bombing

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan (AP)—A suicide bomber penetrated a crowd watching a dog-fighting competition in the Taliban's former stronghold Sunday, killing up to 80 people in one of the bloodiest bombings since the regime's 2001 ouster.

The attack follows a year of record violence and predictions that the Afghan conflict could turn even deadlier this year.

Several hundred people, including Afghan militia leaders, had gathered in a barren dirt field to watch the event on the western edge of the southern city of Kandahar. Witnesses reported gunfire from bodyguards after the blast, but it was not immediately clear if the bullets killed or wounded anyone.

A prominent militia commander who stood up against the Taliban was killed in the attack and officials said he may have been the target. The bombing crumpled several Afghan police trucks and turned the field a bloody red.

World

Kosovo declares independence

PRISTINA, Kosovo (AP)—Revelers fired guns, waved red-and-black Albanian flags and set off fireworks over Kosovo Sunday after parliament proclaimed independence in defiance of Serbia and Russia, which condemned the declaration of the world's newest nation.

A decade after a bloody separatist war with Serbian forces that claimed 10,000 lives, lawmakers pronounced the territory the Republic of Kosovo and pledged to make it a "democratic, multiethnic state." Its leaders looked for swift recognition from the U.S. and key European powers - but also braced for a bitter showdown.

Serbia called the declaration illegal and its ally Russia denounced it, saying it threatened to touch off a new conflict in the Balkans. Russia and Serbia called for an emergency session of the U.N. Security Council, which met later Sunday.

AP

Kosovars celebrate at the statue reading newborn marking declaration of independence in Pristina, Kosovo, Sunday, Feb. 17, 2008.

In the capital, Pristina, the mood was jubilant. Thousands of ethnic Albanians braved subfreezing temperatures to ride on the roofs of their cars, singing patriotic songs and chanting: "KLA! KLA!" the acronym for the now-disbanded rebel Kosovo Liberation Army. They waved American flags alongside the red Albanian banner imprinted with a black, double-headed eagle.

Many dressed in traditional costumes and played trumpets and drums, and an ethnic Albanian couple named their newborn daughter Pavarsie - Albanian for "independence."

UN Security Council meets on Kosovo

UNITED NATIONS (AP)—Russia tried to block Kosovo's independence during a closed-door emergency session of the U.N. Security Council on Sunday, saying it is deeply concerned about the safety of Serbs living in the territory.

The discussion among members of the 15-member council continued to expose their divisions on the future of Kosovo. Russia backs its close ally Serbia, while the United States, Britain, France and other European Union members support Kosovo's majority ethnic Albanians.

The council met at the request of Serbia and Russia, which argue that Kosovo's declaration of independence from Serbia made earlier Sunday violates a 1999 council resolution that authorizes the U.N. to administer the territory.

The session got off to a rocky start; shortly after it began, the session had to be suspended for a couple hours because of a lack of interpreters.

WORLD BRIEFS

French police raid housing projects

VILLIERS-LE-BEL, France (AP)—Police raided housing projects Monday in a Paris suburb in a pre-dawn sweep aimed at finding rioters who led an outburst of violence here last year. More than 1,000 riot police and other officers were mobilized for the raid in Villiers-le-Bel and neighboring towns as part of the investigation into the November riots. Violence erupted in the town's housing projects, populated largely by families of immigrant background, after two teenage boys were killed in a motorbike crash with a police car.

Olmert gives army free hand in Gaza

SDEROT, Israel (AP)—Israel's prime minister on Sunday gave his military a "free hand" to attack Gaza militants after a rocket slammed into a house in this town where the visiting U.N. humanitarian chief had just called for an end to the daily salvos. Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said he would not allow a humanitarian crisis to develop in Gaza, but the people there could not live normal lives while Israelis across the border were constantly targeted by rockets. "We will reach out for anyone involved in perpetrating terrorism against Israelis, and we will not hesitate to attack them in order to stop them," he said. "That applies to everyone, first and foremost Hamas. Hamas is in charge of Gaza."

Iraqi military hopes security will last

BAGHDAD (AP)—Iraqi military officials expressed hope Sunday that security gains from a yearlong crackdown against extremists will allow the removal of thousands of concrete barriers in six months that protect Baghdad residents from bomb attacks. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki spent the weekend touting the successes of the security operation that began one year ago and peaked last summer with the influx of thousands of U.S. troops. The operation helped restore some security to a country that in January 2007 was on the brink of civil war. The U.S. military said Sunday that insurgent attacks had declined by 60 percent over the past year, but cautioned the war was not yet won. Brig. Gen. Qassim al-Moussawi, the chief Iraqi military spokesman for Baghdad, said the government hoped within six months to reopen the Imams bridge, which spans the Tigris river and links a major Sunni neighborhood with a large Shiite district.

Venezuelan scientists head to Antarctica

MONTEVIDEO, Uruguay (AP)—Venezuelan scientists and military officers set out on their country's first expedition to Antarctica, leaving aboard an Uruguayan naval research ship. The 45-day expedition reflects warm ties between two leftist governments, although Uruguayan President Tabare Vazquez has been criticized by political opponents for allowing Venezuelans aboard the Uruguayan vessel. Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez hailed 11 scientists and five naval officers as "pioneers" when he announced the expedition earlier this month. The ship, the Oyarvide, left the capital city of Montevideo without public ceremony on its 2,300-mile journey to Uruguay's Antarctic base. Chavez hopes to establish a research station on the continent too.

Overdrive

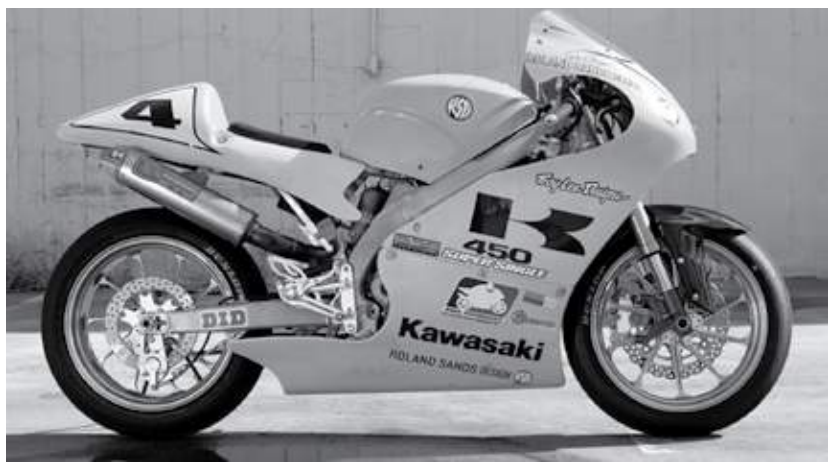
Who ya calling a lightweight?

By SUSAN CARPENTER
(C) 2008, LOS ANGELES TIMES

The KX450F before, top, and after its bold transformation. The model will be available as a kit.
LOS ANGELES TIMES

Top, The CRF450X dirt bike becomes a slick and aerodynamic entry-level road racer. LOS ANGELES TIMES

Left, Honda's CRF450X, before its transformation into a 450 Super Single.
LOS ANGELES TIMES



Roland Sands has spent the past year peeling the skins off dirt bikes, reaching deep inside their body cavities. What he's found are the bikes' unlikely alter-egos.

"Every motocross bike has within it the heart of a road racer," says Sands, a custom builder and former MotoGP champ. At his Roland Sands Design studio in La Palma, Calif., he's taken a trio of Humpty Dumptied 450-cc dirt bikes and managed to reassemble them into 450 Super Singles.

What's a Super Single? That depends. For Sands, it's an opportunity to distinguish himself from the mobs of custom builders that have surfaced in recent years and re-brand himself as the designer of high-concept, high-performance motorcycles. For wannabe racers, it's a lower-cost option for entering the sport. For the industry, it's a concept that holds the potential for a new class of street-legal sport bikes and a new generation of riders.

The Super Single idea is so new that Wikipedia doesn't have an entry—yet—but when it does, it might go something like this: "A 450 Super Single is a single-cylinder 450-cc dirt bike that's been converted into an entry-level road racer. The frame, subframe, swing arm, motor and transmission are all stock, but the wheels, tires, suspension and bodywork have all been modified for on-track use and general skulduggery."

Sands has developed Super Single prototypes for three Japanese models—a Yamaha WR450F, a Honda CRF450X and a Kawasaki KX450F. Only the Yamaha will be sold as a ready-to-race bike. Precise quantities and prices haven't yet been determined, but Sands says the current plan is to make "up to 30" Yamahas and sell them for about $15,000 apiece, with the first one being ready for sale and delivery at the end of February. The other models' mods will be available only as kits, which consist of Roland Sands Design fairings (and the mounts to attach them to the subframe), wheels and foot controls.

Fully assembled, with their slick tires, aerodynamic bodywork and racing front ends, the Super Singles belie their dirt-bike origins. The same is true in the saddle.

I didn't have the chance to take any of Sands' 450 Super Singles on the track, which is where they belong. These bikes are not street legal. But I did take the Yamaha for a short scoot along the chicane outside Sands' workshop, where the bike was so nimble that I felt telekinetic and so lightweight that I thought I would be able to bench-press it when I parked.

These are first impressions, gathered in the three minutes or so I rode the bike on the S-curved side streets. I didn't want to be the girl reporter who prompted the bike's impound, which was likely considering its deficit of Department of Motor Vehicles paperwork.

The Super Single weighs a scant 250 pounds and has a mere 60 horsepower to push it to its top speed of about 130 mph. In other words, a 600-cc or 1,000-cc sport bike could laugh it off the track in a straightaway. But the Super Single actually has a similar power-to-weight ratio to that of a stock 600 super sport.

So, let the bigger sport bikes laugh on a track day in front of the grandstand. They might be crying when the torque-y and lightweight Super Single lives up to its name and makes up for lost time, passing them in the corners. Anyone can twist a grip and go flying, but the emphasis with the Super Single is skill.

That's the whole point of the bike, according to Gavin Trippe, the race promoter, American Motorcyclist Association Hall of Famer and supermoto creator who dreamed up the Super Single idea and brought it to Sands to design. Because certain aspects of the bike cannot be modified—i.e. the motor and swing arm—money can't buy riders a competitive edge with expensive parts that improve performance. And because the bikes are so lightweight, with low horsepower, racers must focus on technique rather than speed.

"Racing needs a lesser level class than trying to strap yourself on a 600-cc motorcycle with 105 horsepower," Trippe said.

The real test of the Super Single will come this spring, when the bikes debut at the WERA Motorcycle Roadracing championship series. How they perform and how racing fans receive them will offer some clues about the possibility of street-legal 450 sport bikes in the future.

"It's really going to depend on how well it kicks off in this track day and racing segment," said Derek Brooks, Yamaha's motorcycle product planning manager. "If it's something everybody starts to gravitate to, then it could. There's definitely potential there."

E-mail Carpenter at susan.carpenter@latimes.com.

Toyota to develop cars for seniors

TOKYO (AP)—For those feeling nervous behind the wheel as old age kicks in, savvy cars may be the answer.

Prof. Ryuta Kawashima, who helped develop Nintendo's "Brain Age" games, is teaming with Toyota to develop cars that help seniors drive safely, the researcher said Tuesday.

"We envision future cars will be able to monitor brain and emotional activity to back up elderly drivers," said Kawashima, a Tohoku University scientist who worked on Nintendo Co.'s best-selling "Brain Age" games—and whose smiling image is the guide in the series.

Among technologies on the table is a that can determine a driver's driving patterns and curb any dangerous activity, Kawashima said. It could, for example, slow the car if it senses the driver is hitting the gas pedal for no reason.

Future developments could involve a navigation system and temperature controls that help drivers stay alert, he said.

"Ultimately, we hope to develop cars that stimulate brain activity, so that driving itself becomes a form of brain training," Kawashima said.

Toyota Motor Corp. representatives are attending sessions of Kawashima's "Mobility and Smart Aging" study group, which he set up in May to discuss senior-friendly cars, he said. The automaker and Tohoku University "are done with brainstorming and ready to start making some of the technologies," Kawashima said, saying some of the technology could appear in cars in five years.

Toyota spokeswoman Kayo Doi said company engineers are working with Tohoku University but aren't ready to announce any specific technologies.

"Brain Age"—a brain-training game series for the DS handheld game console—has sold millions of units around the globe.

Doing simple puzzles and exercises can help stimulate the brain and keep it supple, Kawashima said.

CRUISIN'

Studebaker Lark

By GREG ZYLA
(C) 2008 KING FEATURES SYND., INC.

Q: Greg, I'm a fan of the Studebaker, and especially the Lark that came out in 1959. Did this car ever compete in NASCAR races? I can't recall, but one of my older friends (I'm 74 if that helps), says he knows that a Lark raced in the early NASCAR races. Also, are Larks currently worth a lot of money? -- Stuart K., Port Richey, Fla.

A: Stuart, your friend is correct. In the very first Daytona 500, a 1959 Studebaker Lark driven by Harold Smith, from Dayton, Ohio, started 50th of 55 cars and finished in 31st for a fairly good run. In those days, NASCAR started way more than today's 43 starters. Overall for Studebaker, the make won three races in 1951 NASCAR competition.

As for the Lark, the model saved Studebaker from bankruptcy, as sales in 1959 increased a tremendous 250 percent over a very bad 1958 year. More than 130,000 Larks were sold in 1959, along with another 7,788 Silver Hawks. In 1958, less than 43,000 Studebakers were sold, so the "new" Lark, which was just a new sheet metal design over the old car, was indeed a savior. By 1966, however, Studebaker ceased production with just 8,947 cars built, all in its new Canadian plant.

As for value, there is a nice-looking 1961 four-door, six-cylinder Lark in restored condition listed in Hemmings Motor News for only $6,995, so these cars will never be highly priced collectibles. According to Collector Car Market Review Value Report, the most expensive of the resorted 1959 Larks is a Regal two-door Wagon, which lists for just over $11,000 in pristine condition.

Still, for the price and fun one can have with a Studebaker collector car, I'd say a '59 Lark is a pretty nice choice.

Write to Greg Zyla in care of King Features Weekly Service, P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475, or send an e-mail to gzyla@ptd.net.

Life & Style

Love Connection

A JC Café's Valentine presentation

It was a wonderful evening of fun, enjoyment and singing at JC Café's 2008 Valentine Karaoke Night. It was not only a night of showing and letting all the audiences hear their wonderful and modulated voices but also an occasion where everyone experienced a night of sharing and giving.

To start with, it was Feb. 14, Valentine's Day. To collaborate more with the number "14," JC Café has coincidentally 14 staff!

From the number "14", JC Café manager Lot G. Bunao came up with an idea of making the most of the day by arranging something that would coincide with the number. She called up friends, suppliers and regular customers and asked them for at least $5 contributions to buy prepaid cell phone calling cards and prepaid long distance cards that would be raffled off as prizes. The solicitation plan was to collect 14 calling cards and 14 gift certificates, but people willingly shared more than what she asked for, so the prizes and cards collected actually doubled.

"It really showed that through this love effort, so much love was shared, which made everyone on that wonderful night grateful," said Bunao.

The program started with a serenade from the JC Café staff singing "Hafa Adai" as the welcome Valentine love song. The judges for the Karaoke Contest were introduced followed by the contestants' roll call on the stage. The judges were lawyer Joey P. San Nicolas, Joana Lynn Camacho and Edgar Altariva. Intermission numbers were also a hit, having Donna San Nicolas perform a duet with JC Café's DJ, Jun Iglesia, and the Original Tinian Idol winner Joseph San Nicolas singing with JC Café's Jina Ong.

Another event was the awarding of the JC Café Valentine Couple of the Year 2008. It has been a tradition of the establishment that annually a couple will be chosen and a plaque and prizes will be awarded to the lucky couple. This year, JC Café chose Mr. and Mrs. James and Imelda Wedding as the 2008 Couple of the Year.

This year's Valentine Karaoke winners are Jonie Polistico of Tinian Health Center as the champion, Jeffrey Buado of Star Million for 2nd place, and Mr. Miller of Tinian Dynasty for 3rd place.

After the awarding, the raffle was held and prizes were distributed.

As the show is nearing its end, people trooped to the dance floor and danced the night away. Those who won calling cards could also be seen already calling their loved ones to greet them.

"That simply shows how our Love Connection worked that night from Tinian to Saipan, Rota, Guam, Philippines and to all the places where they can connect with their loved ones," said Bunao.

She acknowledged that, without the sponsors, this event would not have happened, "so we would like to take this opportunity to thank the following individuals and business entities for their untiring support."

The sponsors were Christine Castro (Office of Sen. Joseph Mendiola), Amelia Shai (Office of Rep. Edwin Aldan), Mr. and Mrs. Bill Cing, Emily Kwon, Sonia Pascua, Nanette, Islander Rent A Car, Dick of IBB, Joey Charfauros of MVA, A.M. Enterprises, Kerida's, Vicente Vergara, Juvy and Marvin Cruz, E&J Auto Shop, Johnson's A/C Shop, James Taylor, Gina Pangelinan, Beth and Dionicio Borja, 3K's Laundrymat, Salon de Manila, Long Feng Store, Gizelle Salon, KP Video Rental, Island Store, Zack's CD Rack, Hofschneider Gas Station, SM Mart, Salon Prefessionel, Tinian Family Market, Tinian Dynasty and Staff, Triple J Wholesale, Pacific Amusement and Truong's Restaurant. ***(PR)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Joseph San Nicolas and Jina Ong's duet, "Bakit Ngayon Ka Lang…"

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The judges of the Karaoke Contest, left to right, Edgar Altariva, Atty. Joey P. San Nicolas and Joana Lynn Camacho

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Karaoke Champion from Tinian Health Center, Jonie Polistico.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The JC Cafe Valentine Couple 2008, Mr. and Mrs. James and Imelda Wedding.

Pundit police watch news talkers 24/7

NEW YORK (AP)—Fewer than a half-million people were watching MSNBC when David Shuster made his comment that Hillary Rodham Clinton's campaign had "pimped out" daughter Chelsea by having her make political phone calls.

Among them were monitors at Newsbusters. The Web site posted video of Shuster 10 minutes after the show was over, beginning a reaction that led to his two-week suspension.

The pundit police never go off duty.

Say something stupid, offensive or incorrect on television and you're going to hear about it —fast.

Web sites and bloggers record everything on news programs, an obsessive attention that can foster a hypersensitivity over words and deepen the nation's partisan divide. Without question, they remind pundits that it's important to think before they speak.

"If you're on television, you have the responsibility to be truthful and honest and do your best," said Amy Holmes, a commentator who has worked at Fox News Channel, MSNBC and now CNN. "But I think some of these pundit police hold people to an impossible standard."

It's been a particularly rough month at NBC. Besides Shuster, Chris Matthews apologized after suggesting Clinton's political prominence was due to her husband's infidelities. The watchdog Media Matters for America said there are many other instances where Matthews had been unusually critical of Clinton. The "Today" show had to say it was sorry Thursday after guest Jane Fonda used a vulgarity.

Shuster's words had few defenders, but TV legend Barbara Walters expressed some sympathy for his predicament. Sometimes you say something unfortunate on live TV, she said on "The View."

"He's getting suspended, he apologized, MSNBC apologized," she said. "Drop it already! It's OK. He made a mistake."

Two pundit police chiefs are Media Matters, from the left, and the Media Research Center, from the right. The MRC operates Newsbusters.

Media Matters was founded in 2004 by David Brock, the former conservative who switched allegiances. Its goal is to watch conservative media figures and hang them by their words, publicizing their statements to the wider world and challenging them on facts.

"You certainly know you're having an impact on conservative media when you become part of the conspiracy theories of every right-wing pundit in the country," said spokesman Karl Frisch. "That's sort of a badge of honor."

Fox's Bill O'Reilly is a frequent target; he calls Media Matters "an assassination Web site."

L. Brent Bozell, nephew of conservative icon William F. Buckley, started the Media Research Center in 1987 with the goal of becoming the conservative movement's ombudsman. It tries to sniff out signs of liberal bias and takes the media to task for gaffes, the same standards journalists hold for reporters, said Tim Graham, the center's director of media analysis.

"We have a rather mundane goal here, which is to get eyeballs," Graham said. "We all like making a splash. We all like getting the Drudge link."

Pundits feel the eyeballs.

"In a campaign capacity, I've been known to have foot-in-mouth disease," said Donna Brazile, a manager of Al Gore's 2000 campaign and a CNN commentator. "But as a pundit, I'm much more guarded. If I say something nice about George Bush, I could get kicked around for months."

As a black woman and uncommitted Democratic superdelegate, she knows people are parsing her words to see if they indicate support for Clinton or Barack Obama.

She's also sensitive to language, and has warned CNN against referring to a "back row" of commentators on its New York set. Fifty years after Rosa Parks, it might be taken wrong if the "back row" contains black commentators.

Fox News Channel's Mort Kondracke knows he's been featured on left-leaning sites when he's flooded with complaints that all use the same language.

When he described a tax one day as regressive, "I got an avalanche of e-mails," he said. "I did my research and I apologized the next day. Then I got a bunch of e-mails saying `you spoke too soon.'"

Partisanship gives these pundit police their bite and vigor, yet sometimes undermines their arguments. Media Matters called O'Reilly "ignorant" last fall when he commented about noticing little difference between the black-run Sylvia's Restaurant in Harlem and restaurants owned by whites—while giving him little credit for dining there with Al Sharpton.

Similarly, Bozell criticized CBS News for identifying "conservative" Republicans 44 times during Super Tuesday coverage while not labeling any Democrats as liberal. However, he neglected to note the chief reason for the disparity, that doubt among GOP voters about John McCain's conservative credentials was one of the night's biggest issues.

These kinds of instances make people often dismiss the groups' criticisms simply because of who they are, not what they say.

"If you do something that's incorrect or truly outrageous, there's nothing wrong with being called on it," Kondracke said. "I do think Media Matters tends to go looking for trouble."

One worry within the punditry world is that there are different standards for outrage based on the power of the speaker. MSNBC's Rachel Maddow said she'd probably be fired if she played a satirical song titled "Barack the Magic Negro," yet Rush Limbaugh did it with little consequence. Some critics have wondered why Shuster was suspended for his words while Matthews, one of MSNBC's top personalities, didn't miss a day of work.

Maddow said people on TV should expect scrutiny from pundit police as part of the job.

"They may have my head at some point," she said, "but I think we're better off as a country by there being pundit police and having different pundit police, preferably without a partisan agenda, then if we didn't have people making us accountable for what we say."

Business casual rule No. 1: No sweats

By SUZANNE D'AMATO
(C) 2008, THE WASHINGTON POST

Everyone thinks they know what the term "business casual" means (button-downs and khakis? check), but some of us clearly could use a refresher course. Consider this reader question:

"I work in the administrative offices of an industrial company. The dress code is `business casual,' but that turns into jeans and product-sponsored polo shirts or even product-sponsored T-shirts and sweat shirts. (Our CEO, vice president and heads of HR and accounting all dress in that manner.)

"When I showed up in slacks, heels and a sweater my first day, I got looked at as though I were from Mars. I would like to dress up a little more for work, but anything too far from the jeans-and-polo look would make me stick out like a sore thumb. Any suggestions?"

My immediate suggestions center on the other members of your office. Sweat shirts are for watching "Law & Order" marathons or downing the contents of a bucket of KFC—both worthy pursuits in their own right, but you get the point. They're not for an office.

Since your CEO isn't the one writing in, though, I'll focus on you. Frankly, your first-day outfit doesn't strike me as overkill—it's not as though you showed up to the 9 a.m. meeting in a fur cape, or even a suit.

In a sense, you're asking the impossible: You want to fit in with your sweat-shirt-wearing brethren without, you know, wearing a sweat shirt. I can't go for that. No can do. You must accept that you're going to stand out a little; it's not such a bad thing. Here are some thoughts on doing so stylishly.

Trade your stuffy slacks for more casual wide-leg pants. You don't want to look sloppy, but this is when breezy, not-overly-pressed fabrics can be your friend. I love the look of the Gap's delicately weathered khakis,. With a collared shirt and unbuttoned sweater, the combination is pulled together but not prim. The pastel plaid and rolled-up sleeves do a lot to dress down the look, while the unified palette does just as much to add polish.

If you'd rather stick with slacks, make them denim like Ann Taylor Loft's. Finish with a tidy tee and flats rather than heels. As for the model's chic little trench? That's not for the sweat-shirt crew. Hang it in the office coat room during the day. Then slip it on when you leave work, finally able—and no doubt ready—to greet the regular, well-dressed world.

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Some thoughts on "business casual" done stylishly. From left, Ann Taylor Loft slacks with a tidy tee and flats rather than heels (and a too-cool trench coat); Gap's delicately weathered khakis, collared shirt and unbuttoned sweater look pulled together but not prim.

Tights and shoes: Kickin' combos

By HOLLY E. THOMAS
(C) 2008, THE WASHINGTON POST

Legwear has blossomed into an "it" accessory in its own right. Fashion designers are getting in on the trend, with Tracy Reese and Tibi partnering with Hue to create dainty polka-dot tights and cozy cable-knit leggings.

But how do you pull off different tights, with their myriad colors, patterns and textures, in real life? Here are a few tips to help you coordinate the perfect pair of stockings with some stylish kicks. Get ready to cast off those basic black opaques.

Bright Patterns

Bold legwear calls for simple, classic flats. This combo is most chic when the shoes echo some element of the tights, such as the diamond-shaped applique on this pair. Restrict the palette of your tights to two hues: A bright shade with black works especially well. We Love Colors diamond tights, $14 at www.welovecolors.com. Belle by Sigerson Morrison flat, $270 at www.piperlime.com.

Tony Textures

Textured tights run the gamut, from ladylike laces to cuddly cable knits. A subtle, not-too-thick option in a neutral color is ideal for showcasing a pair of head-turning heels. With platform pumps as racy as these, you want tights that are sophisticated, not overtly sexy. No fishnets, please! DKNY pointelle tights, $18 at department stores and www.barenecessities.com. Dolce Vita "Mamie" pump, $144 at www.shopdolcevita.com.

Luxe Layers

Besides adding warmth, layering tights and socks makes for a fun, bohemian look. How to keep things from getting too bulky? Try footless tights, which provide coverage sans crowding. Add slouchy socks in a neutral shade, allowing a couple of inches to peek over the top. Hue footless tights, $11 at department stores and www.barenecessities.com. American Apparel thigh-high socks, $17 at American Apparel stores and www.americanapparel.net. Steve Madden "Intyce" boot, $200 at Steve Madden stores and www.stevemadden.com.

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Tips to help you coordinate the perfect pair of tights with some stylish kicks. From left, Dolce Vita "Mamie" platform pumps with sophisticated DKNY pointelle tights; We Love Colors diamond tights with simple, classic flats from Belle by Sigerson Morrison; and layered look starting with Hue footless tights, then American Apparel thigh-high socks worn with Steve Madden "Intyce" boots.

IN CELEBRATION OF HIS NEW LIFE

JOAQUIN JONES CASTRO

[CNMI Retired Police Major]

fondly known as "Kindu" and "JJ Castro",
husband of Elisa Ulloa Maratita-Castro,

was called to his eternal rest on Wednesday, February 13, 2008
(Fayetteville, North Carolina, USA, time)

Mass of intention is offered daily at 6:00 a.m. at
Kristo Rai Church in Garapan. Holy Rosary is prayed at
7:30 p.m. at the family's residence in Dandan behind
Joeten Dandan Supermarket.

Interment services will be announced at a later date.

Si Yu'us Ma'ase for your thoughts and prayers.

Lis, Children and Family

'Jumper' hurtles competition, earns $27M

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The globe-trotting thriller "Jumper" leaped to a box office win with $27.2 million on a weekend when Hollywood offered something for everyone, with new films for action fans, teens, family audiences and the date-movie crowd.

Starring Hayden Christensen and Samuel L. Jackson in the tale of a man who can teleport himself instantly to any spot on the planet, 20th Century Fox's "Jumper" has rung up $33.9 million since opening Thursday, according to studio estimates Sunday.

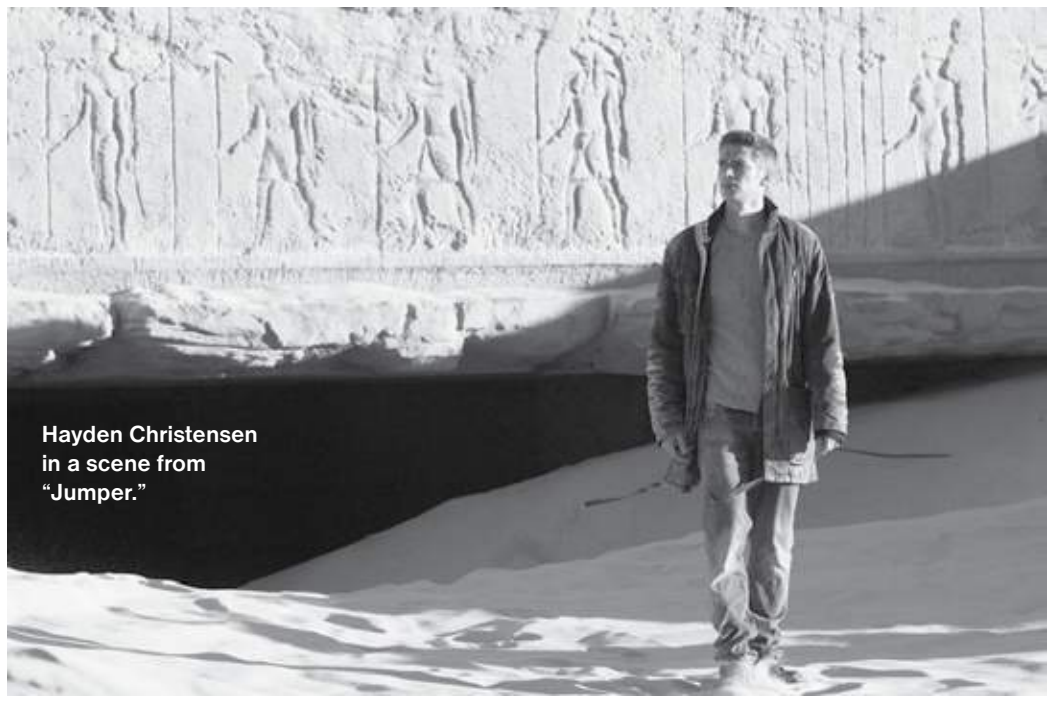
The new wide releases opened a day early, Valentine's Day on Thursday, to get a head start at what studio executives viewed as a long holiday weekend, with President's Day on Monday.

"Valentine's Day has become a great movie-going day," said 20th Century Fox distribution executive Bert Livingston. "Even though kids are not out of school and people are working, it's still a holiday in the sense that in the evening, men take their wives, or girlfriends and boyfriends go out. Everybody goes to the movies."

Debuting in second place was Disney's teen dance sequel "Step Up 2 the Streets," which pulled in $19.7 million for the weekend and $26.3 million since Thursday.

Paramount's family fantasy "The Spiderwick Chronicles," featuring Freddie Highmore and Mary-Louise Parker in the story of a mom and her kids who move into a house menaced by evil creatures, opened at No. 3 with a $19.1 million weekend. Since Thursday, it has taken in $26.8 million.

1. "Jumper," $27.2 million.
2. "Step Up 2 the Streets," $19.7 million.
3. "The Spiderwick Chronicles," $19.1 million.
4. "Fool's Gold," $13.1 million.
5. "Definitely, Maybe," $9.7 million.
6. "Welcome Home Roscoe Jenkins," $8.9 million.
7. "Juno," $4.6 million.
8. "The Bucket List," $4.1 million.
9. "Hannah Montana & Miley Cyrus: Best of Both Worlds Concert," $3.3 million.
10. 27 Dresses," $3.2 million.



Hayden Christensen in a scene from "Jumper."

Universal's romance "Definitely, Maybe," with Ryan Reynolds as a dad looking back on his romantic life after he's served with divorce papers, premiered at No. 5 with a weekend haul of $9.7 million.

The previous weekend's top movie, the Warner Bros. romantic comedy "Fool's Gold," fell to fourth place with $13.1 million, raising its 10-day total to $42 million.

Despite the rush of solid openings, Hollywood was unable to match the weekend business of a year ago. The top 12 movies took in $119 million, down 16 percent from the same weekend in 2007, when "Ghost Rider" opened with $45.4 million, the best debut ever over President's Day weekend.

"A record-breaking debut for `Ghost Rider' led to a record-breaking President's Day weekend last year. Inevitably, that was going to be very tough to beat," said Paul Dergarabedian, president of box office tracker Media By Numbers.

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to Media By Numbers LLC. Final figures will be released Tuesday.

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The Spiderwick Chronicles

Friday		4:00	7:20	9:30
Sat & Sun	1:00	4:00	7:20	9:30
Monday	1:00	4:00	7:20	
Tue thru Thurs		4:00	7:20	

Seth Rogen, Mary-Loise Parker
Fantasy, Children • Rated PG13

Synopsis

Peculiar things start to happen the moment the Grace family (Jared, his twin brother Simon, sister Mallory and their mom) leave New York and move into the secluded old house owned by their great, great uncle Arthur Spiderwick. Unable to explain the strange disappearances and accidents that seem to be happening on a daily basis, the family blames Jared. When he, Simon and Mallory investigate what"s really going on, they uncover the fantastic truth of the Spiderwick estate and of the creatures that inhabit it.

Jumper

Friday		4:05	7:25	9:40
Sat & Sun	1:05	4:05	7:25	9:40
Monday	1:05	4:05	7:25	
Tue thru Thurs		4:05	7:25	

Hayden Christensen, Samuel L. Jackson
Adventure, Sci-Fi • Rated PG13

Synopsis

David Rice has grown up with a mysterious power of which many have dreamed. He is completely and utterly mobile, able to zap through wormholes in the space-time fabric to any city, any building, any place at all that his mind desires. In the blink of an eye, he can "jump" from one side of the earth to the other and back again—he can tour twenty different sunsets in one night, he can have breakfast on the Egyptian Sphinx, spend the day surfing in Australia, then pop over to Paris for dinner and enjoy dessert in Japan.

★ ★ ★

Fool's Gold

Friday		4:10	7:15	10:00
Sat & Sun	1:20	4:10	7:15	10:00
Monday	1:20	4:10	7:15	
Tue thru Thurs		4:10	7:15	

Matthew McConaughey, Kate Hudson
Action, Adventure • Rated PG13

Welcome Home Roscoe Jenkins

Friday		4:25	7:30	9:50
Sat & Sun	1:25	4:25	7:30	9:50
Monday	1:25	4:25	7:30	
Tue thru Thurs		4:25	7:30	

Martin Lawrence, Louis C.K.
Comedy • Rated PG13

Meet the Spartans

Friday		4:20	7:10	9:35
Sat & Sun	1:15	4:20	7:10	9:35
Monday	1:15	4:20	7:10	
Tue thru Thurs		4:20	7:10	

Diedrich Bader, Kevin Sorbo
Comedy • Rated PG13

Sakal, Sakali, Saklolo

Friday		4:30	7:05	9:55
Sat & Sun	1:30	4:30	7:05	9:55
Monday	1:30	4:30	7:05	
Tue thru Thurs		4:30	7:05	

Judy Ann Santos, Ryan Agoncillo
Comedy, Romance • Rated NR

Cloverfield

Friday		@	7:00	9:45
Sat & Sun	@	@	7:00	9:45
Monday	@	@	7:00	
Tue thru Thurs		@	7:00	

Michael Stahl David, Mike Vogel
Comedy, Drama • Rated PG13

27 Dresses

Friday		4:15	@	@
Sat & Sun	1:10	4:15	@	@
Monday	1:10	4:15	@	
Tue thru Thurs		4:15	@	

Katherine Heigl, James Marsden
Romantic Comedy • Rated PG13

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Experts question Spears lawyer's moves

LOS ANGELES (AP)—An attorney who claims to represent Britney Spears has filed papers to move her conservatorship case from the Los Angeles County Superior Court to federal court, but legal experts question whether his legal strategy is viable and whether he can represent the troubled pop star at all.

In a document filed Thursday in U.S. District Court in Los Angeles, attorney Jon Eardley writes that Spears has not "received the benefit of a single hearing before the court," and "is being confined by the conservator to the private prison of her own home," in violation of her civil rights.

Spears

After more than a year of bizarre behavior and two stints in a psychiatric hospital this year, Spears was placed under a conservatorship by a Superior Court commissioner at the beginning of February. Conservatorships are established when a court determines someone cannot take care of themselves or their affairs.

In his federal court filing, Eardley asks "whether an adult child may be subjected by her parents to their complete and total control" and claims her conservators - her father, James Spears, and attorney Andrew Wallet - control what prescription medications she takes.

Calls for comment to Eardley's phone numbers in Washington, D.C., Jericho, N.Y., and Whittier, Calif. were not returned on Thursday or Friday.

Commissioner Reva Goetz has found that under the terms of the conservatorship, Britney Spears lacks the capacity to hire her own lawyer without the approval of her conservators.

Another attorney, Adam Streisand, unsuccessfully sought to represent the singer during a probate hearing Feb. 4 when he argued that she told him by phone that she wanted her father removed as conservator.

Legal experts were doubtful that Eardley's bid to remove the case to federal court would succeed.

"Anyone who's under a conservatorship can argue that they've lost their civil rights," said Peter Tiersma, a law professor who teaches trusts and wills at Loyola Law School. "That's what a conservatorship does, it takes away some of your rights."

If the federal court were to take jurisdiction of the Spears case, said Tiersma, "that would mean that anyone under a conservatorship could do this, and that's a loophole you could drive a truck through."

Family law attorney Alexandra Leichter said the existing orders in the case, including Goetz's decision that the pop star cannot retain counsel, will stand until a district court rules on whether it will take the case, which she said is highly unlikely.

Klum says she wants to help Spears

HAMBURG, Germany (AP)—Heidi Klum wants to help Britney Spears. The 34-year-old model says she'd be willing to open her home to Spears while the troubled pop singer puts her life back together.

"She can call me and come live in our house with us for a couple of months," said Klum, a mother of three who is married to the singer Seal and lives in Beverly Hills, Calif. "I would help set her straight."

"I am sorry when a young person gets thrown so off track," Klum said, according to a transcript of an interview that will be aired Monday night by the German broadcaster ARD. "She has, of course, lived an extremely wild life."

After more than a year of bizarre behavior and two stints in a psychiatric hospital this year, Spears was placed under a conservatorship by the Los Angeles County Superior Court commissioner at the beginning of February. Conservatorships are established when a court determines that someone cannot take care of themselves or their affairs.

To hear Klum, the host of Bravo's "Project Runway," describe it, her own life seems like a fairy tale.

"I have never been as happy as I am today," Klum said. "I have found the man of my life and we have three great kids. They are all so different and fantastic that it really can't get better than this."

Even without writers, Leno was on top

By MEG JAMES
(C) 2008, LOS ANGELES TIMES

HOLLYWOOD—The strike by the Writers Guild of America ended not a moment too soon for Jay Leno. After 100 days, the guests were wearing thin.

Larry the Cable Guy made his fourth appearance just this week on NBC's "The Tonight Show With Jay Leno." Animal ambassador Joan Embery—the sixth animal act in as many weeks—dropped by with another passel of critters. "We thought we had seen every animal there was, but we dug around the back yard and found some more," Leno said during Wednesday's show as he welcomed Embery, whose menagerie included chinchillas and Siamese fighting fish.

In danger of falling behind his chief rival, "The Late Show With David Letterman," Leno in fact emerged from the strike unscathed—even with one hand tied behind his back because, for much of the writers walkout, he was operating at a disadvantage.

"The Tonight Show" and the other late-night talk shows went into reruns when the strike began Nov. 5. To demonstrate solidarity with his staff of 19 striking writers, Leno frequently visited picket lines outside NBC in Burbank, Calif., where his head writer served as a strike captain. Like other late-night TV talk-show hosts, Leno paid nonwriting staffers out of his own pocket for a few weeks.

But NBC, which has been struggling in the prime-time ratings, was anxious to get "The Tonight Show" back on the air. The show is one of the most reliably profitable programs on the network: Last year it generated more than $150 million in advertising revenue and earned a profit of about $50 million, according to people familiar with the show's finances.

So, two months into the strike, Leno crossed picket lines to go back on the air with new shows.

At the time, Leno was facing a depressing coda to his successful career on NBC. With only about 18 months left on his contract, the ratings race had tightened during the reruns, threatening his crown. Then the WGA struck an interim deal with the company owned by Leno's nemesis David Letterman, which produces "The Late Show With David Letterman" and "The Late Late Show With Craig Ferguson." The two CBS shows were able to return to the air in January with their writers penning fresh Top 10 lists and jokes.

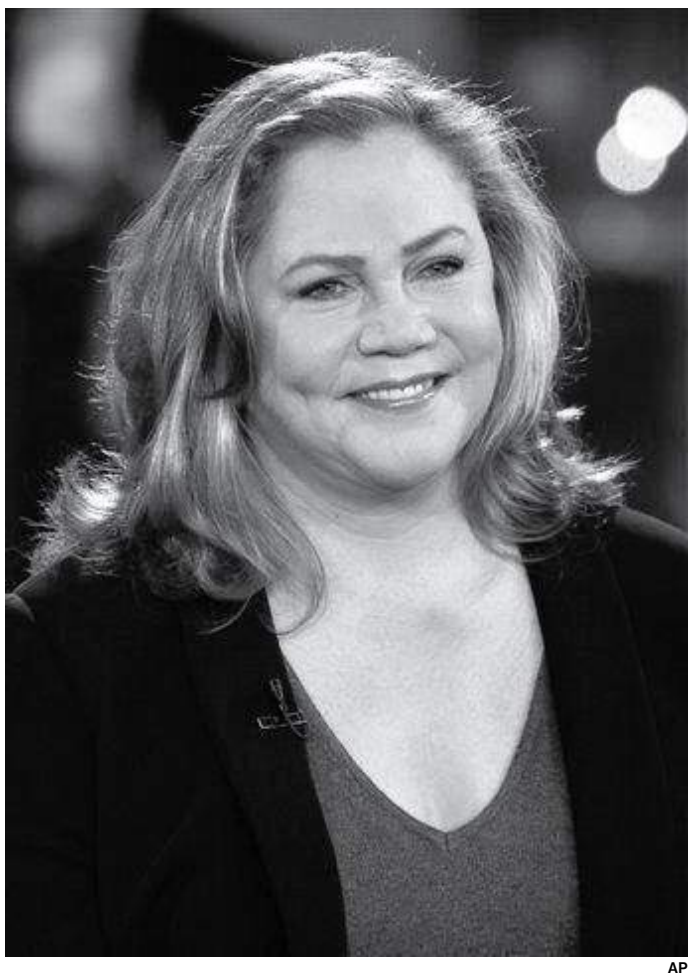
But not Leno. NBC, which owns "The Tonight Show," was a struck company and writers were forbidden to work for it.His first night back in front of the cameras, on Jan. 2, Leno ignited a furor when he admitted that he had written his own monologue. Calling that a violation of strike rules, the WGA said it would investigate the actions of one of its most prominent members.

The WGA summoned Leno to a meeting to discuss the situation. But he declined to attend when he was told that he couldn't bring his attorney, according to a person close to the show. So nothing happened.

The WGA declined to comment Thursday, saying the incident was an internal matter.

But if the guild's intent was to reward Letterman and punish Leno and NBC, then the gambit appears to have backfired. Leno's ratings immediately snapped back to pre-strike levels, surpassing Letterman's.

Kathleen Turner saves cash by riding bus



AP

Actress Kathleen Turner appears on NBC "Today" show in New York Wednesday Feb. 13, 2008.

NEW YORK (AP)—Kathleen Turner eats out less and often takes mass transit now that she's doing stage work instead of films - and she enjoys getting compliments on the bus.

Turner, who recently directed the comedy "Crimes of the Heart" off-Broadway, said fellow travelers frequently recognize her.

"They do very often. People are so nice. They smile and say, 'You're looking good. I love your work,'" the 53-year-old award-winning actress told Newsweek for editions on newsstands Monday. "This is a very lovely thing to have in your life."

Turner also just wrote the memoir "Send Yourself Roses."

"A lot of it was getting to a certain place in my life where I felt I had 30 years in the business. I think women my age are creating this wave, that society hasn't caught up with yet, being the first generation of women who are financially independent."

She won Golden Globes for best actress for "Romancing the Stone" (1984) and "Prizzi's Honor" (1985), and was nominated for an Oscar for 1986's "Peggy Sue Got Married."

Pearl Jam's Vedder will play solo shows

LOS ANGELES—Eddie Vedder will undertake his first solo tour with a handful of shows in April highlighting music from the Pearl Jam leader's music for Sean Penn's film "Into the Wild."

The brief run opens April 2 in Vancouver, British Columbia, and will include shows April 12-13 at the Wiltern Theatre in Los Angeles before wrapping April 15 in San Diego.

Pearl Jam's Web site will have information about ticket sales, and members of the group's fan club will get first crack at them.

New Zealand alt-rocker Liam Finn will be Vedder's supporting act for the shows, all of which will take place in California, except for the Vancouver opener. ***(Los Angeles Times)***

Pa. county to Sorvino: Where's the film?

SCRANTON, Pa. (AP) -- First-time director Paul Sorvino doesn't understand why his investors are so jittery. More than two years ago, Lackawanna County agreed to partner with Sorvino on "The Trouble with Cali," an independent film the "GoodFellas" star is producing and directing in northeastern Pennsylvania.

Shot in the Scranton area in 2006, the low-budget movie has yet to hit theaters, prompting the cash-strapped county to ask Sorvino what he has done with its $500,000 investment.

Sorvino says he's happy to provide a full accounting of the money. But, he adds, elected officials don't necessarily have a good understanding of the movie business. And he resents any implication that he has been less than forthright.

"To have my honesty impugned has never happened in my life," the burly character actor said in a phone interview. "The record of how the money was spent was always available, to the penny."

Sorvino, 68, describes "Cali" as a black comedy about a young ballerina and her dysfunctional family. His Oscar-winning daughter, Mira, has a cameo; another daughter, Amanda, wrote the script; son Michael also appears on screen. Sorvino himself plays Cali's father, a New York police lieutenant.

Sorvino, who lives in the nearby Pocono Mountains, says he has completed a "very rough cut" of the film and hopes to have it ready for a distributor in three or four months. He's raised about $975,000 of the movie's projected $1.3 million budget, including a personal investment of $175,000.

He says he won't get paid until the county and other investors see a 20 percent return on their investment.

But some investors are getting impatient. County commissioners Michael Washo and Corey O'Brien have criticized the investment as too risky.

"If it's a good film, hopefully we'll receive a return on our investment," O'Brien said. "If it's a lousy film, we probably won't."

Sorvino says he's confident "Cali" will find an audience.

"I have never done anything that I've been in charge of that has failed. I don't intend to make this the first one," Sorvino said. "It's a wonderful movie and I can't wait to get it out."

Sorvino has ties to Scranton since he came to the city 25 years ago to film "That Championship Season," a movie adaptation of the Pulitzer Prize-winning play by Jason Miller.

Mom feels helpless watching troubled son waste his life

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

DearAbby

DEAR ABBY: My son, "Keith," is 20. He lives at home with his dad, brother and me. Keith dropped out of high school when he was a senior. His driver's license was suspended due to non-payment of tickets.

A couple of years ago, he stole from us and finally admitted he had a drug problem. We sent Keith to a 30-day residential drug treatment facility. When he got out, he stayed in a halfway house for three months, then lived with another recovering addict in an apartment. Keith had a job then, but lost it and moved back home.

He still hangs out with his same old friends. He sleeps all day, gets up late in the afternoon or early in the evening, and goes out again. I know my son drinks, and I realize he's probably using again, too, but I don't know where he gets the money to buy them. He has worked in restaurants off and on over the past two years, but is currently unemployed.

I have tried everything I know to help him. We dragged him to counselors, but Keith wouldn't follow their suggestions. We beg him to get his GED, but he lies to us that he's going to school and working on it. Keith asks me to wake him so I can take him to apply for jobs, but when I do, he refuses to get up.

His dad and I have to hide our wallets because he has stolen our checks and credit cards before. His purchases are usually at gas stations and fast food restaurants. Keith tells us he's not using anymore, but his actions make it hard to believe.

I can't live my life standing idly by, watching my son ruin his life. I love him. If I don't stand by him and try to help him, he has no one. His dad acts like he hates him. He either ignores him or gets on his case whenever he talks to him. Have you any advice for me?

—DEEPLY HURT IN MEMPHIS, TENN.

DEAR DEEPLY HURT: Your son definitely has problems, and you need to find out what exactly they are. If he's using, you can find out by making him take a home drug test. ("Take it, or you're out.")

If he tests negative, then it's possible that your son is suffering from depression or some other mental illness. And if that's the case, you should make his getting psychiatric help a condition of his continuing to live at home.

The only thing you cannot do is let yourself be trapped into becoming your son's enabler. You must set a deadline for him to find a job or move out on his own, and insist that he abide by it.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: My wife's niece is being married in May. The wedding is 1,500 miles from here. Our daughter, "Sophie," a college sophomore, will be a bridesmaid in the wedding.

For the last year and a half Sophie has been dating "Trey," whom she met at school, and it appears to be a solid relationship. I like him.

Trey received an invitation to the wedding, too, which was unnecessary in my opinion. Now my wife insists it's our responsibility to buy Trey an airplane ticket so he can attend. He will stay in a hotel room with my sons if he goes.

I don't mind paying for the room and related expenses, but I see no reason why I should fork out hundreds of dollars for an airline ticket. I already have to pay for my family of five for this trip. My wife says I'm stingy. Am I?

—GETTING FLAK IN ATLANTA

DEAR GETTING FLAK: It was nice of your sister-in-law to invite your daughter's boyfriend to the wedding. If you can afford to buy him a ticket, doing so would be a nice gesture. However, you are under no obligation to foot the bill for his transportation.

■ ■ ■

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

■ ■ ■

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Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE TRANSMOGRIFIER? WHY WON'T IT WORK??
YOU INVENTED IT. YOU TELL ME.
DON'T TELL ME. I'M STUCK AS AN OWL FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE!
I THINK OWLS MOSTLY EAT MICE. I SUPPOSE WE COULD CATCH SOME IN THE YARD.
THIS IS AWFUL! WHAT AM I GOING TO DO?!
UGGH, I COULD NEVER EAT A MOUSE RAW. THEIR LITTLE FEET ARE PROBABLY REAL COLD GOING DOWN.
WILL YOU FORGET THE STUPID MICE AND HELP ME THINK?!?
I WONDER IF PET STORES WILL SELL YOU A MOUSE IF THEY KNOW YOU'RE GOING TO EAT IT?
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WATERSON
2/19

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By Jim Davis

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JIM DAVIS 2-19
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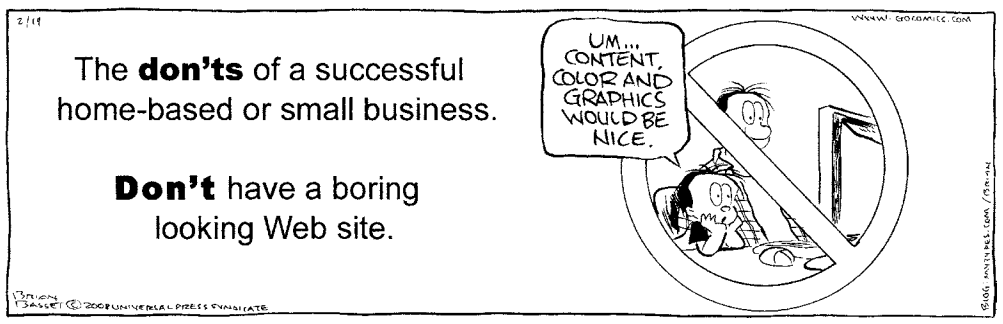
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset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The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

I've looked over your resume, Mr Camino.
I'm very impressed.
Great.
I'm going to offer a job to the kid who typed this up for you.
Great.—
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www.geocomics.com

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

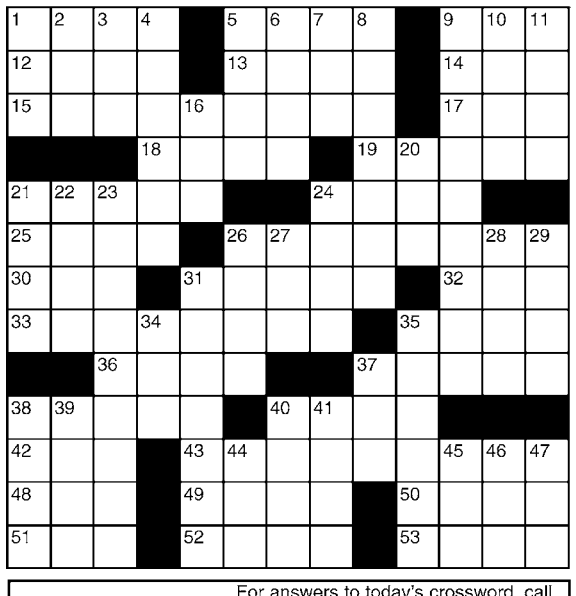
ACROSS
1 Musical combo
5 Let fall
9 Four qts.
12 Chills and fever
13 Highly rated
14 Sapporo sash
15 Newly-weds' trip
17 Moray, e.g.
18 Confined
19 Indecent
21 Dreams and aspirations
24 Trumpeter Al
25 Verve
26 In song, it "saw me standing alone"
30 French article
31 Makes dirty
32 Paid athlete
33 Jackson choreography
35 Christmas rendition
36 — -yourself kit
37 "Likewise"
38 Rage
40 Bound
42 Science workshop
43 Hillbilly's quaff
48 Every last crumb
49 Therefore
50 Satan's forte
51 Quilters' get-together
52 Actor Roger
53 "Wunnerful" music-maker

DOWN
1 "Humbug!"
2 Past
3 Sister
4 Drill farther
5 Rhett's shocking word
6 Source
7 Lennon's lady
8 Small change
9 Deteriorates
10 Help a hoodlum
11 Easter symbol
16 "Without a doubt"
20 Branch
21 Steerer's place
22 Bread spread
23 Music often played at bullfights
24 Dr. Banner's alter ego
26 Craft
27 "— Abner"
28 Hydrox rival
29 Contendere preceder
31 Butterfly expert?
34 Neither mate
35 Huey, Dewey or Louie
37 More, to Miguel
38 Thick chunk
39 Story
40 Theater box
41 Grandson of Eve
44 Tramcar contents
45 "— had it!"
46 Zero
47 Wapiti

Solution time: 21 mins.

A	S	P	S	■	L	E	D	■	P	O	E	T
S	U	R	E	F	I	R	E	■	E	X	P	O
S	P	O	I	L	E	R	S	■	R	E	I	N
■	■	■	N	O	D	■	P	O	U	N	C	E
S	C	R	E	W	■	B	A	S	S	■	■	■
I	R	E	S	■	T	O	I	L	E	R	S	■
R	I	D	■	C	H	A	R	O	■	A	P	E
■	B	O	I	L	E	R	S	■	F	R	E	E
■	■	■	M	O	B	S	■	W	R	E	C	K
S	C	A	M	P	I	■	R	H	O	■	■	■
M	E	N	U	■	B	R	O	I	L	E	R	S
O	D	O	R	■	L	A	W	G	I	V	E	R
G	E	N	E	■	E	M	S	■	C	A	P	O

Yesterday's answer 2-19



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Justine Bateman, 42; Seal, 45; Jeff Daniels, 53; Smokey Robinson, 68

Happy Birthday: You will have to take a unique approach to work and dealing with your colleagues this year. Sort out any differences through communication and keeping the peace. Change will be inevitable but only difficult if you fight to keep things the same. Openness will lead to your success. Your numbers are 13, 17, 20, 33, 36, 44

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): Enjoy life and what it has to offer. Keeping an open mind to ways of making money will improve your financial situation. You may not agree with the way things are being done but the result will be good. ✪✪✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Before you are critical, be sure you have all your responsibilities covered. An emotional message may be sent to you if you are too pushy or demanding. The innocence of a child's take on things will be an eye opener. ✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): Create, decorate and make some changes at home. Sharing an idea with someone who can help you advance will lead to a better position. Love is in the stars so plan a romantic evening but don't say you love someone if you don't. ✪✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): You'll be up and down emotionally but don't let that cause you to overreact, make accusations or show jealous tendencies. Plan your next move before taking action. If you travel or offer too much information, you will leave yourself vulnerable. ✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): Entertain everyone with your Leo charm and you will gain popularity today. Emotional issues with someone you love will escalate if you ignore his or her complaints. Put some time aside to take care of personal matters. ✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): There is a secret that is best left that way. Someone you work with may be in a difficult position; offer him or her your services and solutions. A strong feeling about someone or something will lead to profits. ✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Do something that will alter the future. Make reforms or join a group you believe in and a new friendship will turn out to be inviting. Honesty will be a must when it comes to your likes, dislikes and goals. ✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Take a serious approach to what you are doing and stay out of trouble. The more you interact with others, the less chance you will have at completing what you want to do successfully. Do not become sidetracked. ✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): Deals can be made, money spent and contracts signed. You will be in the right place at the right time but don't start to waffle or change midstream or you will be right back where you started. Be willing to go the distance. ✪✪✪✪

CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Take a serious approach to money matters and financial gains will unfold. Make your position clear and you will remain in control. This is not the time to give in to someone who wants to take advantage of you. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Just be yourself and say what you feel and you will find out exactly where you stand. Love is in the stars and you can secure your position in any relationship you are involved in. You will win any challenge you face. ✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Work quietly on your own. Avoid anyone who is trying to back you into a corner or pick a fight with you. Now is not the time to argue but rather to work, develop ideas and take care of your health. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are a mastermind at creative problem-solving. You are competitive and unafraid of a challenge. You are strong, steadfast and sensitive.

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EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku By Dave Green

5			7			1		
	3		9	2				
					3			9
2	1		6			7		
	8			7			9	
		4			8		3	2
3			1					
				8	4		1	
		6			5			7

Difficulty Level ★★ 2/19

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

3	6	4	9	2	8	7	1	5
2	8	9	7	1	5	6	4	3
1	7	5	6	4	3	9	8	2
8	1	3	5	7	9	4	2	6
7	9	2	4	8	6	5	3	1
5	4	6	2	3	1	8	7	9
9	2	1	8	6	7	3	5	4
4	5	8	3	9	2	1	6	7
6	3	7	1	5	4	2	9	8

Difficulty Level ★ 2/18

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

CALENDARS **Solution: 9 letters**

I	E	Y	T	F	I	G	T	P	S	P	R	E	A	D
W	L	T	E	T	I	C	K	A	P	N	O	T	E	S
E	B	L	R	A	E	H	T	G	O	O	S	P	I	T
I	B	E	U	L	R	E	S	E	N	I	A	I	S	Y
V	I	V	L	S	E	C	I	S	S	T	C	L	S	H
E	R	O	M	R	T	K	T	P	O	O	O	F	E	P
R	C	N	E	H	I	R	R	O	R	M	L	Y	N	A
R	S	N	E	N	D	C	A	R	T	O	O	N	I	R
S	E	M	E	C	T	R	A	T	S	R	R	N	S	G
W	E	P	E	R	I	Y	M	S	E	P	S	U	U	O
Y	G	R	L	S	E	F	S	O	L	D	P	F	B	T
L	N	E	A	A	S	F	F	S	D	P	H	R	(F)	O
I	A	P	T	U	C	A	E	O	O	E	O	(O)	O	H
A	H	A	E	A	Q	E	G	R	O	L	(L)	S	O	P
D	C	P	R	S	D	S	T	E	D	(D)	G	S	T	K

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Yesterday's Answer: Hot dip

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1 ACCOUNTANT (T 3946)
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1 HEAVY EQUIPMENT OPERATOR (T 3947)
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1 CAR CLEANER (T 3948)
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1 VICE PRESIDENT (T 3949)
Salary:$3,000.00-$3,855.00/monthly. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self arranged food; medical & workmen's compensation provided. Contact: Century Insurance Co., Ltd. @234-0609.

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1 GENERAL MAINTENANCE (T 3950)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Medical expense & tax. Contact: Fausto V. Supnet dba Lawncare Janitorial Housing Service @433-4333.

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1 WELDER (T 3951)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self housing; self food; medical & workmans compensation to be provided by the employer. Contact: R.E.A.L International Corp. @433-4336.

3 MASON (T 3952)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self housing; self food; medical & workmans compensation to be provided by the employer. Contact: R.E.A.L International Corp. @433-4336.

1 DRESSMAKER (T 3953)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self housing; self food; medical & workmans compensation to be provided by the employer. Contact: R.E.A.L International Corp. @433-4336.

---

1 TOUR AGENT/ COUNSELOR (T 3954)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self provided food; medical insurance & workers compensation. Contact: Hiro Corporation @233-4997.

1 SALES & MARKETING SUPERVISOR (T 3955)
Salary:$3.55-$5.80/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self provided food; medical insurance & workers compensation. Contact: Hiro Corporation @233-4997.

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1 ACCOUNTANT (T 3956)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self provide housing; self provide food; workers compensation; group life insurance & medical. Contact: Seaside Mart, Inc. @234-6376.

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1 WAITRESS (T 3957)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Health & workmans compensation. Contact: J'smalotte Corporation dba Char's Snack Bar @235-7092.

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1 AUTO MECHANIC (T 3958)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self provide housing; self provide food; medical & workers compensation. Contact: Javili General Partnership dba YJC Auto Shop @235-4928.

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1 SEWER (T 3959)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self provide housing; self provide food; medical & workers compensation. Contact: Zhen Rui Brother Corp. dba Ah Biao Clothing Store @233-8877.

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1 SALES CLERK (ATTENDANT) (T 3960)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self arranged food; free medical expense & workman's compensation. Contact: Pam Pacific Development Inc. dba Pena House Boutique @235-6888/7888.

JOE HILL, Esq.,
HILL LAW OFFICES
P.O. Box 500917, Saipan, MP 96950
Phone: (670) 234-6806/7743
FAX: (670) 234-7753

Attorney for Petitioner

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

YOLANDA F. TORRES-AUSTRIA	)	FCD DI CIVIL ACTION NO. 07-0410
Petitioner	)	
versus	)	
ROGELIO AUSTRIA,	)	**SUMMONS**
Respondent.	)	

TO THE ABOVE-NAMED RESPONDENT:

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and notified to file any answer you wish to make to the Petition for Divorce which is given you herewith, within thirty (30) days after service of this Summons upon you.

YOUR ANSWER SHOULD BE IN WRITING and filed with the Clerk of Court, Guma' Hustisia, Iimwal Aweewe, House of Justice, P.O. Box 500307, Saipan, MP 96950 and served upon petitioner's counsel, Atty. Joe Hill, P.O. Box 500917, Saipan, MP 96950. It may be prepared and signed for you by your counsel and sent to the Clerk of this Court by messenger or mail. It is not necessary for you to appear personally until further notice.

If you fail to file an answer in accordance with this Summons, judgment by default may be taken against you for the relief demanded in the Petition for Divorce.

By order of the above Court:

Dated this 12th day of July, 2007.

/s/ Deputy Clerk of Court
Superior Court

WHATZIT Solution:
Forgive and forget

1 COMMERCIAL CLEANER (T 3961)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self arranged food; free medical expense & workman's compensation. Contact: Pam Pacific Development Inc. dba Pena House Boutique @235-6888/7888.

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2 GARBAGE COLLECTOR (T 3962)
Salary:$3.05/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self arranged food; free medical expense & workmen's compensation. Contact: AYD Services, Inc. @235-7011.

4 HEAVY EQUIPMENT OPERATOR (T 3963)
Salary:$3.05/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self arranged food; free medical expense & workmen's compensation. Contact: AYD Services, Inc. @235-7011.

Commercial Space & Room for Rent
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- Room from $80-$140/mo. behind Triple J Auto on Beach Rd. near to XO Market & H-Mart.

Call Ivan @ 235-0479, 285-9966, 9:00am - 6:00pm

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1 PASSENGER SERVICE AGENT (T 3964)
Salary:$3.55-4.05/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self provided food; medical & workers compensation employers provided. Contact: Pacific Oriental INC. @ 288-0360 to 0362.

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1 SALES MERCHANDISER (T 3965)
Salary:$3.55-4.00/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self provided food; medical & workers compensation employers provided. Contact: Coca-Coca Beverages Co. @ 235-2553.

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1 WAITER/WAITRESS (T 3966)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Medical & workers compensation employers provided. Contact: Dynamic core Group, Inc dba Shirley's Coffee Shop @ 235-5379.

CLASSIFIEDS RATES AND POLICIES

Saipan Tribune's Classifieds Section gives you the right exposure without hurting your pockets. Stretch your dollar and get results.

CLASSIFIED ADS

Saipan Tribune also offers a Super Saver Package—a complete 7-day run on both print and online edition, for as low as $25 per 3 liner ad for garage sales, apartment rentals, help wanted, auto and more. You can choose from any of below packages that fits your budget.

ADS (7DAYS)	**COMBO (PRINT AND ONLINE)**
• 3-Liner	**$25**
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As added service to our valued customers, you may now submit all your JVA placements for announcement/publication in *Saipan Tribune's* print and online edition and KZMI/KCNM at the same time. No more worries of having to go to two different locations every time you need to place job vacancy announcements. Special rates are available for JVA customers under this arrangement.

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• Up to 6 positions	**$5**
• More than 6 positions	**$10**

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*These rates apply to all vacancy announcements that include corresponding benefits and which announcements are all under the same company name.

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Classified Ads

Ads must be submitted before 12 noon 2 days prior to publication date

Job Vacancy Announcements

Monday Through Friday Issues: All ads placed before 12 noon will come out the next publication date.

Saturday And Sunday Issues:
- *Saipan Tribune:* All ads placed Friday before 12 noon will come out Saturday issue and anything placed thereafter will be published on either Sunday or Monday issues.

- KCNM/KZMI: All ads placed on Friday (9am to 5pm) will be for Monday's radio announcement.

CANCELLATION

Classified Ads

Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

Job Vacancy Announcements

Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

REFUNDS

Refunds will only be made if cancellation deadlines are met. No refunds will be made once ad is already printed.

CHECK YOUR ADS

Saipan Tribune will not be responsible for errors after the first day of publication. Errors should be called in before noon of the issue date. *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

ADVERTISING POLICY

All advertising in the *Saipan Tribune* are subject to applicable rate sheet, copies of which are available from the Advertising Sales Department (please call 235-8747, 235-2769 or 235-6397). All ads will be subject to approval prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit, refuse, reject or cancel any ad at any time. Also, Saipan Tribune reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

Allen leads East to All-Star win

AP

East All-Star LeBron James of the Cleveland Cavaliers dunks over West All-Star Dirk Nowitzki, bottom right, of the Dallas Mavericks during the fourth quarter of the NBA All-Star Basketball Game Sunday, Feb. 17, 2008, in New Orleans.

NEW ORLEANS (AP)—Toss some leftover Mardi Gras beads toward the East. LeBron James and his crew earned them.

Outdunking, outpassing and outperforming their more trumpeted counterparts from the Western Conference, the Eastern Conference All-Stars avenged a year-old beating with a 134-128 win on Sunday night.

Ray Allen scored 28 points, making three straight 3-pointers in the final 3:15, and James added 27, including a did-he-really-do-that? dunk in the last minute to propel the East and earn MVP honors.

Last year, the West humiliated the East in a 153-132 rout in Las Vegas when Kobe Bryant and Co. rewrote the event's record books. However, this time led by Allen's 14 fourth-quarter points and James, the East salvaged some pride and can return to the season's second half with bragging rights.

"They beat up on us pretty bad last year," James said. "We didn't want to allow that to happen. We wanted to win."

James, who added nine assists and eight rebounds, was MVP for the second time in three years. He also won the honor in 2006, when the East beat the West in Houston.

Amare Stoudemire, Brandon Roy and Carmelo Anthony scored 18 points apiece to lead the West, which trailed by 13 entering the fourth quarter before rallying behind New Orleans' own Chris Paul. The sensational guard's seventh assist of the final period set up Roy's layup to give the West a 122-119 lead.

But Boston's Allen, the final player added to either roster, knocked down his second 3-pointer in 48 seconds to tie it before Paul answered with a 3, sending the hometown crowd into a frenzy.

Allen finally missed and James poked away the ball, and then came up with the night's most stirring moment.

Slashing through the lane, Cleveland's megastar rose and dunked over several West defenders, much like he did in Game 5 of last year's Eastern Conference finals in Detroit when he scored the Cavaliers' final 25 points

"We had two people on him," Paul said. "but that still wasn't enough."

Paul was called for an offensive foul on the West's next trip. Dwyane Wade hit a layup and Allen scored to make it 131-125. Roy's 3-pointer with 8.7 seconds brought the West within three, but Allen made three free throws to close it out.

The weekend in New Orleans was about much more than spectacular dunks, a game featuring marginal defense or collecting strings of beads while strolling down boozy Bourbon Street. The NBA came to the Big Easy hoping to help this special city continue its comeback from Hurricane Katrina, the effects of which are still being felt 2 1/2 years since she blasted through.

On Friday, the world's biggest basketball names as well as hundreds of volunteers fanned out to all sides of the city to help refurbish playgrounds, paint houses and lend a hand with whatever they could on a day devoted to community service.

Many of the players were moved by the experience and came away with a greater sense of what the area has gone through and the monumental work that lies ahead in the Gulf Coast Region.

"Well, I hope not just me, but every All-Star from the East and West was able to put smiles on kids and on families faces," James said. "I think we all know what happened, the devastation down here and to bring the NBA All-Star game here I think it really uplifted the families down here. We had a great time."

Bryant, who won MVP honors last year, played less than 3 minutes so he could rest his injured pinkie. The 10-time All-Star dislocated his finger earlier this month and doctors have advised him to have surgery.

Bryant, though, energized by the club's addition of center Pau Gasol in a trade, wants to delay any operation until late summer. As soon as he took on the West's bench, a trainer wrapped a large ice pack around his entire hand, rendering arguably the league's top player to spectator status.

The West could have used him.

"There's one player we really, really missed, and that was Kobe," West coach Byron Scott of New Orleans said. "Obviously, Kobe would have loved to play."

New Jersey's Jason Kidd spent the weekend wondering whether he would be going back to the Nets or changing into a Dallas jersey. A complex trade, snagged when Mavericks guard Devean George blocked the deal, may have new life.

The clubs still hope to get a deal done before Thursday's deadline.

Players were grooving even before they hit the floor.

Introduced under a balcony resembling one in the city's historic French Quarter, several of the All-Stars danced as a local brass band filled New Orleans Arena with the sounds that exemplify the area's laid-back, fun-loving ethos: Laissez Les Bon Temps Roulez - Let The Good Times Roll.

The East came out flying, getting seven dunks and a layup in the first 5 minutes to take an early 11-point lead before the West awakened. Paul and Hornets teammate David West sparked the West, which cut it to two before James, Kidd and Dwight Howard, whose Superman routine won him Saturday's dunk contest, put on passing display like they were playing pickup ball in the schoolyard.

On one possession, Kidd threw a lob pass to James, who then bounced it off the glass for a charging Howard, who slammed it in. Both teams were scoring so quickly in the second quarter that the p.a. announcer was having a hard time keeping up.

"Rasheed Wallace," he said before catching a breath to say, "Carmelo Anthony."

The game was missing one of its biggest stars as Shaquille O'Neal was not selected, snapping his record-tying 14-year run. Without O'Neal, there were no comedic moments like when Shaq pulled out a giant sneaker phone or made like a point guard and dribbled his way up the court.

Reports: Mavs, Nets get Kidd deal done

DALLAS (AP)—Jason Kidd is headed to the Dallas Mavericks after all, although in a trade that's slightly different than originally arranged.

The new deal—as reported by various media outlets Sunday night, all citing anonymous sources—has Kidd and forward Malik Allen going to Dallas for point guard Devin Harris, center DeSagana Diop and swingman Maurice Ager, plus a few new pieces: retired forward Keith Van Horn and Trenton Hassell.

New Jersey also will get two first-round draft picks and $3 million.

Van Horn and Hassell replace Jerry Stackhouse and Devean George. Stackhouse's presence in the deal was muddled by plans to get him back to Dallas—within the rules, although in a way the league frowned upon—and George used his veto power to block his involvement.

The reconfigured proposal is expected to be offered for league approval Monday. If all goes as planned, Kidd could make his return to the team that drafted him when the Mavericks play in New Orleans on Wednesday night.

Word of the deal broke Sunday night while Kidd was playing for the Eastern Conference in the All-Star game. A spokesman for the New Jersey Nets declined comment at the game in New Orleans.

If all goes as planned, Kidd will be back in the Western Conference by the time the All-Star break ends.

Kidd spent the first 2-plus seasons of his career in Dallas. The Mavs drafted him third overall in 1994 and he was the NBA's co-rookie of the year in '94-95. He was traded to Phoenix in December 1996, then went from the Suns to New Jersey prior to the 2001-02 season. He helped the Nets reach the NBA finals his first two seasons, but they haven't made a long playoff run since.

The Mavericks have been among the NBA's top teams the last few years, but have fallen short of a title. They're trading Harris' promising future in hopes that Kidd, who turns 35 next month, has enough tenacity and leadership to push them over the top.

Dallas has been eyeing Kidd for a while. Team owner Mark Cuban may have sped up the process after seeing other top Western Conference teams make pivotal additions.

This deal seemed done earlier last week until George whacked it. Stackhouse's talk of being bought out and re-signing with the Mavs also didn't sit well with league officials.

The big winner in this is Van Horn, who has been out of the league the last 1 1/2 seasons.

Dallas still owned his rights, so his involvement is essentially to make the numbers work. He'll be signed then traded—and, like Kidd, he'll be heading back to his original team. It's unclear whether he'll actually play for the Nets, but it seems unlikely.

Lefty makes it a sweep of West Coast

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Phil Mickelson now has left his mark all over the Left Coast. Mickelson held on long enough for Jeff Quinney to self-destruct on the back nine Sunday at Riviera, closing with a 1-under 70 to win the Northern Trust Open and complete an impressive collection of trophies in California and Arizona.

A year ago, Lefty was poised to win in L.A. until he bogeyed the 18th hole and lost in a playoff against Charles Howell III. This time, he was steady down the stretch as Quinney faltered, and won by two shots for his 33rd career victory, 16 of those on the West Coast.

"It's pretty cool," Mickelson said. "I've wanted to win this tournament for a long time."

Quinney's time will have to wait.

He holed four straight putts outside 10 feet around the turn and briefly held the lead. But his streak of 214 holes without a three-putt ended on the 13th to fall out of the lead, and Quinney soon fell apart.

He bogeyed three straight holes, and three-putted again from about 20 feet on the 17th for another bogey that allowed Mickelson a relaxing stroll up the fairway and toward the storied clubhouse atop Riviera.

Quinney made a 25-foot birdie putt on the final hole that only mattered on his card, an even-par 71.

British Open champion Padraig Harrington and Luke Donald each shot 68 and tied for third, although this was a two-man race from the start, and a one-man celebration over the final two holes.

Mickelson might never catch Tiger Woods in the world ranking, PGA Tour victories or in the majors, but for now he has something the world's No. 1 player has never done—win at Riviera.

Jack Nicklaus never won here, either.

Mickelson made sure that didn't happen to him. He first played the fabled course 20 years ago as a 17-year-old amateur, and returned only sparingly throughout his career. But he reworked his schedule to make room for Riviera, and has fallen in love with the place.

His work on the West Coast is now over.

Mickelson has won at Torrey Pines and La Costa, Pebble Beach and Los Angeles, and in the deserts of Phoenix, Palm Springs and Tucson. The only tournament he has failed to win on the West Coast is the Accenture Match Play Championship, which starts Wednesday just north of Tucson. He will be the No. 2 seed and takes momentum with him.

The victory came one week after taking an 11 on the 14th hole at Pebble Beach to miss the cut, and two weeks after he lost a playoff to J.B. Holmes in the FBR Open. Mickelson now has won at least once since 2004, and his 33rd victory moved past Horton Smith and into 13th place alone on the career list.

It only looked easy on the scoreboard.

Mickelson, who had a one-shot lead going into the final round, quickly stretched it to three shots when he opened with a two-putt birdie and Quinney missed a 7-foot par putt on the third. And it looked as though Mickelson would make short work of Quinney, a former U.S. Amateur champion who was No. 146 in the world ranking.

Quinney, who made an ace on the sixth hole Saturday, this time settled for a 3 1/2-foot birdie putt to stay in the game, then he poured it on around the turn with a series of putts that must have made Mickelson feel like he was playing Retief Goosen at Shinnecock Hills.

The lead was down to one when Quinney holed from 15 feet for birdie on the eighth and took the outright lead with a two-shot swing on the ninth. From the slope above a fairway bunker, Mickelson's approach went so far right that it cleared the gallery and landed in the middle of the 10th fairway. He hit a flop shot just short of the green and took bogey, while Quinney made his 12-footer for birdie.

By then, no one was within six shots of them.

It was a two-man race, with Quinney showing more moxie than he has in previous final rounds when trying to win.

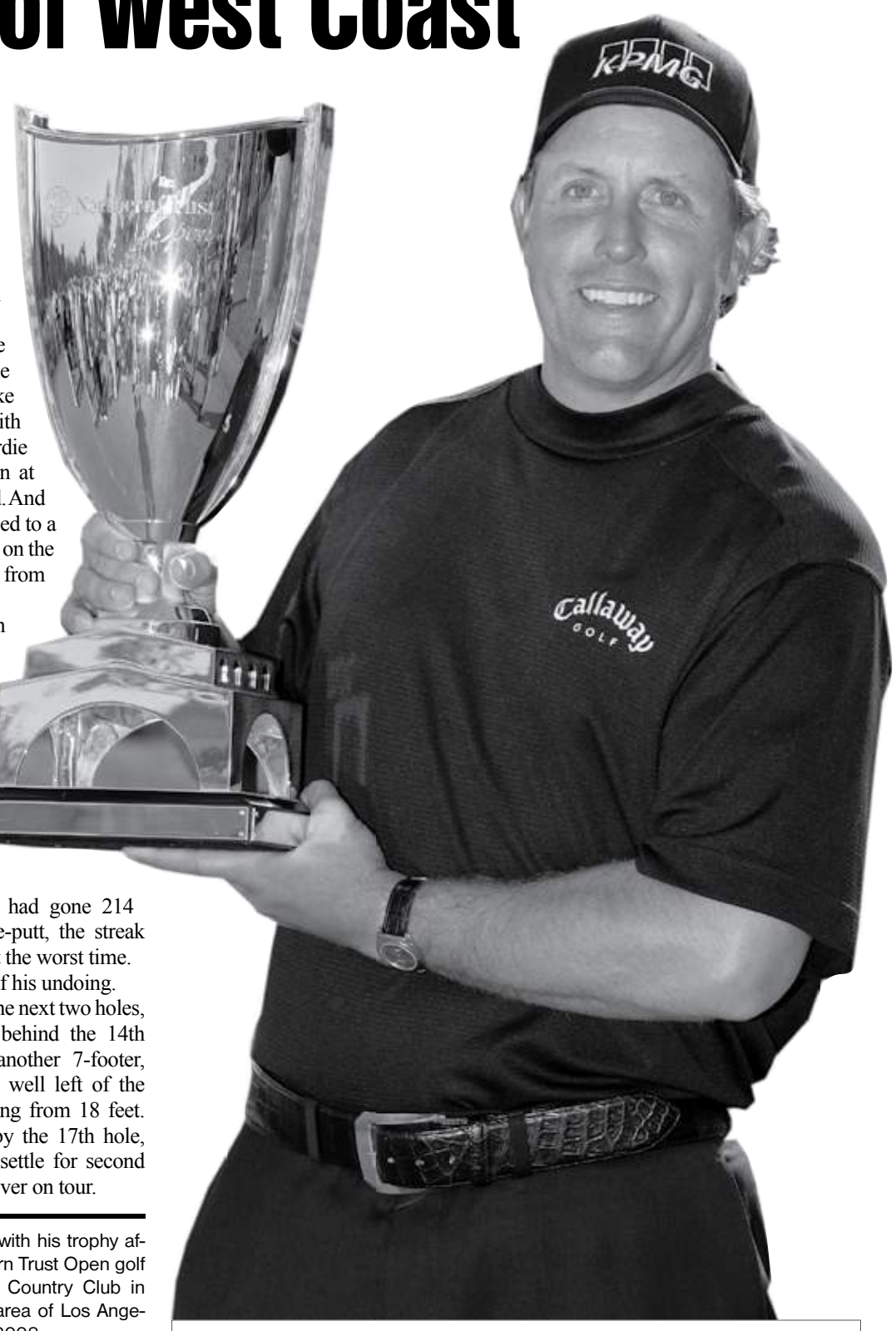
Quinney hit wedge into a bunker on the 10th and had to make a 10-foot par putt with Mickelson in birdie range, keeping him in at least a share of the lead. And after Mickelson chipped to a foot for a tap-in birdie on the 11th, Quinney holed from 20 feet to match him.

But his magic touch with the putter lasted only so long.

He ran a 55-foot birdie putt some 7 feet past the hole, and moments after CBS Sports posted a graphic showing Quinney had gone 214 holes without a three-putt, the streak ended with a bogey at the worst time.

That was the start of his undoing.

Quinney bogeyed the next two holes, chipping long from behind the 14th green and missing another 7-footer, then hitting a hybrid well left of the 15th green and missing from 18 feet. All hope was gone by the 17th hole, and Quinney had to settle for second place, his best finish ever on tour.



Phil Mickelson poses with his trophy after winning the Northern Trust Open golf tournament at Riviera Country Club in the Pacific Palisades area of Los Angeles, Sunday, Feb. 17, 2008.

AP

Belichick breaks silence on taping

BOSTON (AP)—Patriots coach Bill Belichick broke his silence on New England's twin taping controversies, denying he told anyone to tape the St. Louis Rams' walkthrough before the 2002 Super Bowl and apologizing for all the attention generated by Spygate.

Belichick also told the Boston Globe he "couldn't pick Matt Walsh out of a lineup." Walsh, a former Patriots employee, reportedly taped St. Louis' walkthrough practice the day before the Patriots beat the Rams 20-17 in the championship.

"In my entire coaching career, I've never seen another team's practice film prior to playing that team," Belichick said in a story posted on the Globe's Web site Sunday night. "I have never authorized, or heard of, or even seen in any way, shape, or form any other team's walkthrough. We don't even film our own."

Patriots vice president of player personnel Scott Pioli also told the newspaper that part of the reason Walsh was fired in January 2003 was because he secretly recorded conversations between himself and Pioli.

Michael Levy, Walsh's attorney, said Pioli's account was a "complete fabrication."

"This is a predictable and pathetic effort to smear Mr. Walsh's character rather than confront the truth about the Patriots' conduct," Levy said in the Globe story.

Levy has said his client is willing to turn over videotapes he made for the team if the NFL guarantees Walsh protection from lawsuits or other legal action.

Commissioner Roger Goodell has said he offered Walsh a deal requiring him "to tell the truth and he has to return anything he took improperly" in return for indemnity, but Levy has said the deal doesn't go far enough.

Goodell fined Belichick $500,000, the Patriots $250,000 and took away a first-round draft choice after the Patriots were caught taping New York Jets' coaches in last year's season opener, a 38-14 New England victory.

Belichick said he misinterpreted the rule, which he felt only prohibited taping that could be used during the same game.

He also apologized for the controversy the taping caused.

"I respect the integrity of the game and always have and always will," he said in the Globe story. "I regret that any of this, or to whatever extent, it has in any way brought that into question or discussion or debate. The decision was made by the commissioner, the practice was immediately stopped, and we're not doing it.

"Just going back over the whole taping incident, if I contacted the league and asked them about the practice, I'm sure they would have told me—as they have done—that it is not permissible. Then I could have avoided all of this.

"I take responsibility for it," he said. "Even though I felt there was a gray area in the rule and I misinterpreted the rule, that was my mistake and we've been penalized for it. I apologize to everybody that is involved—the league, the other teams, the fans, our team, for the amount of conversation and dialogue that it's caused."

The day before the Patriots' 17-14 loss to the New York Giants in this year's Super Bowl, the Boston Herald reported New England taped St. Louis' walkthrough before the first of the Patriots' three Super Bowl victories. In a walkthrough, teams practice plays at a slower pace than normal without pads or helmets.

Patriots spokesman Stacey James did not return phone calls or an e-mail seeking comment Sunday night.

Wake Forest shocks 2nd-ranked Duke, 86-73

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. (AP)—Jeff Teague scored 26 points and Wake Forest shocked No. 2 Duke 86-73 on Sunday night, ending the Blue Devils' 12-game winning streak and giving first-year coach Dino Gaudio his first big victory as the heir of the late Skip Prosser's program.

James Johnson added 24 points for the Demon Deacons (16-8, 6-5 Atlantic Coast Conference), who claimed their first victory against a top-five team since they also knocked off the then-No. 4 Blue Devils on Feb. 2, 2005.

Wake Forest won its third straight, improved to 14-1 on its home court and snapped a five-game losing streak in the series on the strength of a 17-2 run midway through the second half and some smothering defense, forcing the Blue Devils into a season-high 22 turnovers.

The Demon Deacons held Duke (22-2, 10-1) without a field goal for more than 7 minutes in building the first double-figure lead of the game for either team, with Teague's three-point play with 4:58 left making it 72-62.

After Kyle Singler's layup at the 11:20 mark gave the Blue Devils their largest lead of the half at 60-55, they missed 11 consecutive shots before Paulus ended the drought with a 3 with just over 4 minutes left. They didn't get closer than six points the rest of the way.

Freshman Nolan Smith scored a season-high 21 points, DeMarcus Nelson had 18 points and Singler finished with 17 for the Blue Devils, who had all five starters foul out in the closing moments in losing for the fourth time in five visits to Winston-Salem.

Jamie Skeen added 10 points for Wake Forest, which came out determined to honor Prosser's memory and give Gaudio a signature win, rocking the Joel Coliseum like it hadn't been in years.

With students spelling out "WIN 4 SKIP" in body paint and the players loudly chanting "Dino" in the hallway beforehand, Wake Forest came out firing and opened the game with an 18-9 run. Teague scored 11 points during the burst, capping it with his third 3-pointer 5 1/2 minutes into the game. The Demon Deacons led for most of the first half, with Skeen's stickback at the buzzer giving them a 47-42 lead.

Sta. Lucia in command, 2-0

Youth brigade takes control for Realtors

MANILA, Philippines—The Sta. Lucia coaching staff showed up wearing green shirts with the word "BELIEVE" emblazoned on it in big, bold letters.

And boy, two games into the 2007-08 Smart PBA Philippine Cup Finals, not a few have turned into real believers.

Sta. Lucia's youth brigade wore down Purefoods with its stamina, agility and tough defense to bulldoze the Giants Sunday, 112-101, for a 2-0 advantage in the best-of-seven championship series.

Kelly Williams put together another double-double effort of 23 points and 11 rebounds in a game where youth made the big difference.

Kerby Raymundo and James Yap—Purefoods' 1-2 punch—each came up with 20-point games but couldn't save the Giants from another defeat, visibly tired and worn-out in the crucial stage of the game.

"Again, the players did what they had to do. We played tough defense and kept our composure," said Sta. Lucia coach Boyet Fernandez.

The Realtors turned the game around in the fourth by opening the period with a 12-2 run that propelled them to a 93-83 advantage.

Williams started the charge with a three-point play, Dennis Espino (15-points, 9 rebounds) scored on a layup and completed a three-point play before Nelbert Omolon (19 points) ended the blitz with back-to-back baskets.

"We may be up 2-0 but nothing is certain in a seven game series. We'll just take it one game at a time. We respect the Purefoods organization and I know they'll make the adjustments in the next game," said Fernandez.

Game 3 is set at 7 p.m. on Wednesday.

The Giants got a good break in the third quarter when the Realtors went into penalty with still nine minutes left in the period. But they couldn't capitalize, going 13-of-21 from the line and 7-of-18 from the field.

Joseph Yeo had another impressive game, scoring 16 points and Denok Miranda added 14 and six assists while making sure James Yap earns all his points.

Paolo Mendoza also made his presence felt. He scored 10 points that included three consecutive baskets in the first quarter, shattering Purefoods' zone defense to bring the Realtors back in the game.

James Yap led all scorers with 28 points and cornered 10 rebounds but was visibly spent by the time the game got into the third quarter. He was just 1-of-5 from the field and 7-of-12 from the line in the third period. Raymundo, who finished with 22 points, also struggled in that period and made just one attempt.

Sta. Lucia 112 – Williams 23, Omolon 19, Yeo 16, Espoino 15, Miranda 14, Mendoza 10, Reyes 6, Daa 5, Gonzales 4, Coronel 0. Aquino 0.

Purefoods 101 – J. Yap 28, Raymundo 22, Simon 21, Evangelista 11, Pingris 6, Castillo 5, Salvador 3, Adducul 3, R. Yap 2, Larong 0, Lanete 0.

Quarters: 28-26; 53-53; 81-81; 112-101. ***(www.pba.com.ph)***

Top Pool bar 8-ball moved to Thursday

Top Pool Bar Professional 8-Ball Billiards Tournament has been moved to Thursday from its original Sunday spot.

Like the Garapan sports bar and watering hole's 9-ball tournament every Sunday, the Thursday 8-ball will also have a $10 entry fee. The competition uses a double-elimination format. Both tournaments follow Billiards Congress of America rules.

The sports bar is reminding interested 8- and 9-ball players that early birds get a chance to practice for free on any of Top Pool Bar's full-size billiard tables an hour before the competition.

Top Pool Bar, located along Hotel Street Garapan a stone's throw away from the Paseo de Marianas, is as spacious as it is modern and boasts of two 9-1/2-by-5-foot tables usually found in professional tournaments abroad.

For more information on the ongoing 9-ball and moved 8-ball weekly competitions, call 287-7676 or check out the competition's website at www.saipanero.com/bars/toppoolbar.

(Mark Rabago)

ERRATUM

In yesterday's story, "Players should learn CPR and first aid," Marianas Baptist Academy principal pastor Ramir H. Trinidad was inadvertently referred to as Pastor Gagarin. Our apologies.

AUSTRALIA

From Page 28

four medals. He also earned enough individual points to be awarded the runner-up High Point Trophy in his division.

Cooper's medals came in the form of silver medals in the 200m freestyle and the 100m breaststroke as well as two bronze medals in the 100m butterfly and 100m backstroke.

Fifteen-year-old Sarah Johnson, meanwhile, continued her season improvement by winning three medals during their stay in the world's smallest continent.

She struck gold in the 200m freestyle and earned two silvers in the 100m freestyle and 100m backstroke

Another 15-year-old swimmer, Blair Nichols, also earned three medals—a silver in the boys' 15-16 100m backstroke and bronze medals in each the 100m and 200m freestyles.

Rounding out the medal count was 17-year-old Junior Pamaran, who earned two bronze medals in the 17-and-over 200m freestyle and 100m breaststroke.

The Far North Queensland Swimming Championships was held from Feb. 16 to 17.

Other members of the eight-person team were 10-year-olds Victoria Chentsova and Abigail Martinsen, 13-year-old Lester Lapuz, and 14-year-old Michael Moran Jr.

SSC head coach Michael Stewart said he was pretty happy how the trip to Australia went.

"The kids did a great job considering the tough travel trip down [to Australia] with little rest getting ready for the competition. Our kids' times were outstanding. They swam against some of the best Northern Australia had to offer. It was a great learning experience, as well as a great team-bonding trip," he said.

After the Far North Queensland Swimming Championships, SSC will next prepare for the International Meet where four off-island teams have made commitments to compete. It culminates with the 30th Annual SSC Ocean Swim around the tanks.

PALACIOS

From Page 28

ing MMA fighters on the island.

Even though Palacios was deducted a point in the second round after throwing a knee while standing still on the mat, it did not affect the result of the match as two of the three judges ruled in his favor.

One of the judges scored the match at 29-28, while the other 29-27 in favor of Palacios. The third judge scored the match a draw at 30-30.

The match went to the scorecards as neither warrior tapped out or was knocked out in the highly energized main event.

Both fighters were a bit hesitant to make the first move as they started the first 30 seconds of the first three-minute round by sizing up each other.

Charley made the first move and threw up a punch that nearly hit Palacios, who ducked just in time to evade the hard blow that could have brought him down.

They traded blows, jabs, punches, and kicks before Palacios found an opportunity to take down Charley as he made a move to choke his opponent and force him to tapout.

Charley, however, turned the tables as he managed to squeeze out of Palacios' hold and gain advantage by trying to choke his opponent.

Palacios fought back by preventing Charley to lock up his arms at the choke-hold position and managed to get out of harm's way.

Both fighters gave the fans a good show as neither of them blinked or budged in everything that they threw out against each other. It was also a highly technical match as both Palacios and Charley traded techniques and fought a combined nine minutes in the three rounds trying to outsmart each other.

In the end, Palacios earned the nod of the judges as he managed to land the heavy blows on Charley based on the scorecards.

Fans gave each fighter a rousing applause as they hugged each other inside the octagon in the spirit of sportsmanship.

In the semi-main event, veteran fighter J.D. "Out" Reyes foiled the MMA debut of amateur boxer Conrad "The Ex-Con" Iba of Team Tinian.

Reyes defeated his opponent after Iba tapped out after a hard body slam with two minutes and four seconds gone in the first round.

Reyes improved to a 4-3 record. Iba holds a 6-1 card as a boxer.

Rites of Passage is the proving grounds for up-and-coming young warriors who want to test their MMA skills in front of a smaller crowd and see whether they could make it to big no-holds barred fights inside the octagon.

Rookie warriors who win their fights would get the chance to earn an invitation to Trench Warz VIII, which is tentatively set on June 8.

For more information, call Alvarez at 483-4MMA or 483-4662.

OL'ACES

From Page 28

Carl Camacho pitched 2.3 innings in relief, limiting the Lion Hearts to three runs on two hits fanning two and walking four batters.

Yamada closed out for Ol'Aces forcing Greg Iskawa to an infield fly before giving up consecutive hits to Ricardo Dela Cruz and Timothy Guerrero, who later both scored on an Arthur Jefey single.

Yamada settled in after that and ended the Lion Hearts' comeback bid by forcing Leo Blas to ground out at second base while striking out Anthony Guerrero.

SENIOR LEAGUE
Jets 10, D9ers 0

The Jets zoomed to its second straight win after a 10-0 shutout of the D9ers.

Jonathan Pangelinan pitched in no relief allowing the D9ers to one hit while striking out five batters and walking two.

Jared Camacho had the D9ers' lone hit when he led off the third inning with a single.

The Jets also used a five-run first inning as cushion.

BIG LEAGUE
Hustlers 9, PTI Dolphins 3

Giovanni Ayuyu won a pitching battle against Elton Santos to lead the Hustlers to a 9-3 win over the PTI Dolphins.

Santos earned the loss despite registering a season-high 12 strikeouts but failed to get the needed run support from his teammates.

BADMINTON

From Page 27

14, to claim the week's bragging rights.

Five other mixed doubles pairs joined Saturday's mini-tournament including the tandems of Loida Ito and Roger Vales, Angie Ito and June Pineda, Macoi Aguda and Juliet Ramos, and Shirley Kim and Rommel Villaviza.

Angie Ito and Pineda joined the teams of Gabriel and Peraja and Dar Juan and Mendoza in the second round.

Only two courts are being used for the mini-tournament with the other four reserved for those players who do want to join the games.

Last Feb. 9, Ryan Achas and Jojo Lazaro won the men's doubles, while Dar Juan teamed up with Merlie Savellano to emerge victorious in the women's division.

Achas and Lazaro downed Mendoza and Noli Santos in the finals, while Dar Juan and Savellano defeated Loida Ito and Ramos.

Other pairs in the men's division were Marconi Calindas and Edwin Montoya, Macoi Aguda and Ariel Mariano, and Glenn Buultjens and Raj Jayalal, while the women's were composed of Kim and Cristy Villaflor, Peraja and Annette Quiambao, and Janis Parcon and Nimfa Santos.

HEO

From Page 28

18-and-under title, 9-7. Decena edged Dominic von Siebenthal, 8-6, while Buenaventura beat James Camacho, 8-3, in the semifinals.

Chris Cajigan scored a 6-1 win over Colin Ramsey for the boys' 9-and-under title, while Ackerman ruled the girls' 9-and-under division after a 6-4 decision against Gabi Race.

Imazato bounced back to rule the mixed up doubles when he paired up with Chris Cajigan in beating the tandem of Son and Gabi Race, 8-6.

Over 100 players joined the Coconut Classic, which is the first tournament of the year organized by the Northern Mariana Islands Tennis Association. A total of 46 pairs, or 92 players, also took part in the "mixed up" doubles.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NORTHERN TRUST OPEN SCORES

Final Round

Phil Mickelson	68-64-70-70	272
Jeff Quinney	69-67-67-71	274
Padraig Harrington	69-69-71-68	277
Luke Donald	68-71-70-68	277
Ryuji Imada	71-69-70-68	278
Scott Verplank	68-69-71-70	278
Robert Allenby	70-66-75-68	279
K.J. Choi	65-73-71-70	279
J.B. Holmes	74-66-69-70	279
Stuart Appleby	69-70-69-71	279
Steve Stricker	71-69-71-69	280
Chad Campbell	67-70-73-70	280
Mark Wilson	70-70-69-71	280
Adam Scott	73-69-70-69	281
Jason Gore	71-72-71-67	281
Matt Kuchar	73-71-70-67	281
Bubba Watson	71-68-71-71	281
Steve Flesch	71-71-68-71	281
Joe Durant	71-70-69-71	281
Charlie Wi	70-68-71-72	281
John Rollins	68-70-69-74	281
Kevin Sutherland	70-69-73-70	282
Marc Turnesa	75-70-67-70	282
Paul Casey	73-70-69-70	282
Peter Lonard	69-70-74-69	282
Nathan Green	72-70-70-70	282
David Toms	71-68-72-71	282
Lucas Glover	72-69-70-71	282
D.J. Trahan	70-74-66-72	282
Vaughn Taylor	67-70-71-74	282
Tag Ridings	75-68-70-70	283
Fred Couples	70-70-72-71	283
Hunter Mahan	68-74-70-71	283
Angel Cabrera	68-73-70-72	283
Brandt Jobe	71-68-71-73	283
Brad Adamonis	72-71-69-72	284
Alex Cejka	68-72-73-71	284
Jeff Overton	74-69-70-71	284
George McNeill	72-69-71-72	284
Vijay Singh	71-72-71-70	284
Pat Perez	69-72-71-72	284
Bart Bryant	74-69-71-70	284
Bill Haas	72-71-72-69	284
Rory Sabbatini	72-67-74-72	285
Billy Mayfair	68-69-74-74	285
Tom Pernice, Jr.	72-72-68-74	286
Craig Barlow	69-74-69-74	286
Scott McCarron	72-65-76-73	286
Toru Taniguchi	72-71-71-72	286
Sergio Garcia	74-71-69-72	286
Steve Marino	69-70-71-76	286
Zach Johnson	72-67-71-76	286
Brian Bateman	70-70-76-70	286
Aaron Baddeley	73-70-74-69	286
Kevin Na	66-76-73-72	287
Charles Howell III	71-70-74-72	287
Ben Crane	70-74-73-70	287
Fredrik Jacobson	72-73-72-70	287
Dustin Johnson	68-73-69-78	288
Cody Freeman	70-74-72-72	288
Michael Allen	75-70-73-70	288
Ryan Moore	72-71-71-75	289
Kenny Perry	72-73-70-74	289
Rocco Mediate	75-70-70-74	289
Cameron Beckman	74-70-72-73	289
Ben Curtis	70-71-76-72	289
Shigeki Maruyama	71-74-74-70	289
Mathew Goggin	73-71-72-74	290
Kevin Streelman	75-69-74-72	290
Fred Funk	74-70-71-76	291
Briny Baird	71-74-70-76	291
Dean Wilson	71-72-74-74	291
Bo Van Pelt	71-74-72-74	291
Will MacKenzie	71-73-75-72	291
John Daly	69-74-73-76	292
Carl Pettersson	70-74-74-74	292
Eric Axley	71-72-78-71	292
Chez Reavie	73-71-71-78	293

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Raphael razor-sharp in Bing Energy Drink bowling

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSISTANT EDITOR

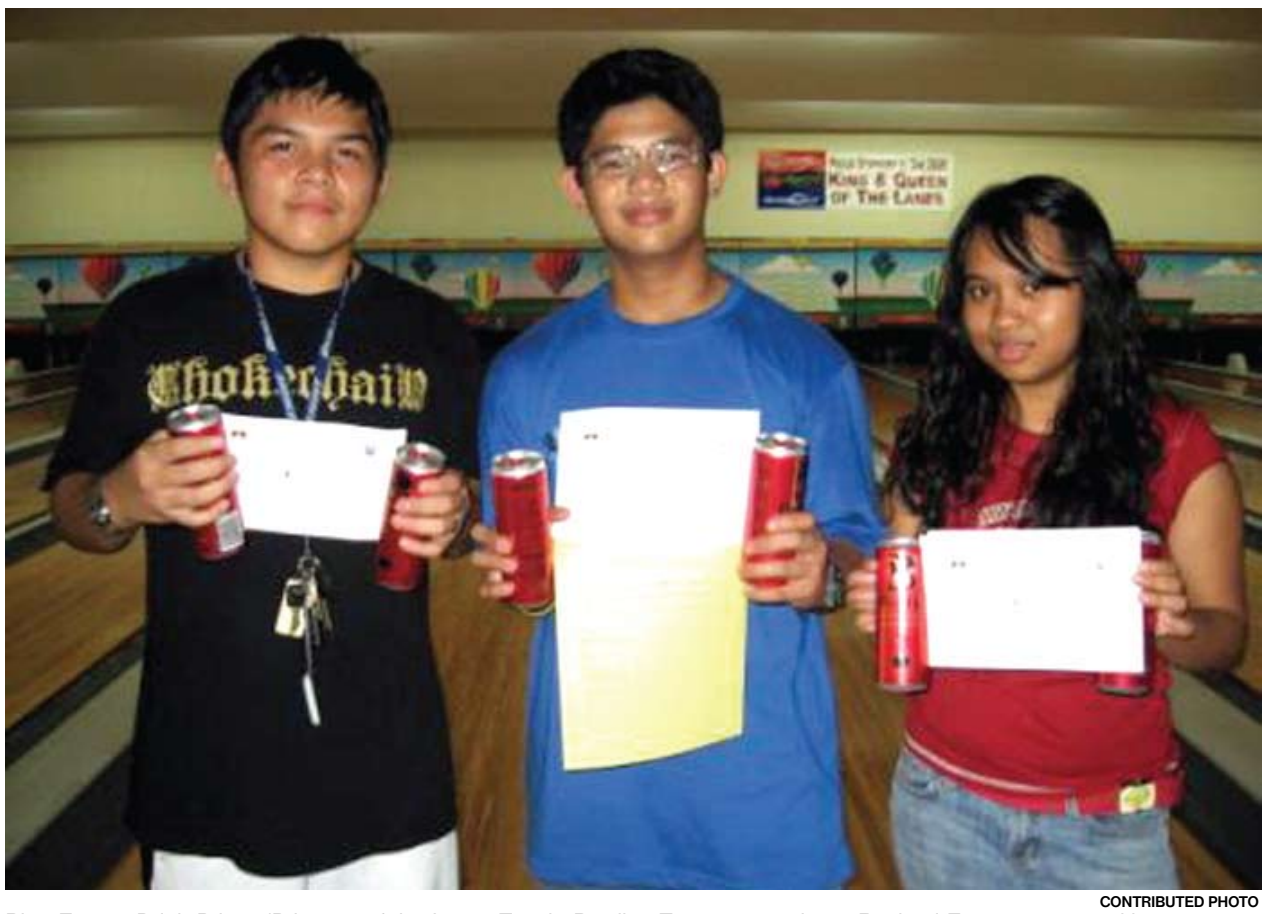
Raphael Zapanta beat Mayanne McKenzie to win the first-ever Bing Energy Drink Prince/Princess of the Lanes Tenpin Bowling Tournament last Sunday at the Capital Bowling Center in Garapan.

The Chacha Junior High School student won the February roll-off among youth bowlers after tattooing 651 pins in four games for a 162.75 average.

The 13-year-old kegler started well, obliterating 162 and 161 pins in Games 1 and 2, respectively. He continued his consistency, rolling scores of 171 and 157 in Games 3 and 4 to take home the monthly championship for youth bowlers, who are 12 to 19 years old and not bowling in any leagues or averaging less than 160 in any league.

Ten pins off Zapanta's pace was McKenzie who rolled a four-game total of 641, good for an average of 160.25. McKenzie started off on the wrong foot, firing a pedestrian 148 in the first game before scoring 171, 151, and 171 in the final three.

J.D. Torres complete the Top 3 in the Bing Energy Drink Prince/Princess of the Lanes, toppling 627 pins to average 156.75 after stringing together games of 191, 131, 130, and 175.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Bing Energy Drink Prince/Princess of the Lanes Tenpin Bowling Tournament winner Raphael Zapanta poses with runners-up Mayanne McKenzie and J.D. Torres following Sunday's competition at the Capital Bowling Center in Garapan.

Zapanta, McKenzie, and Torres took home $20, $15, and $10, respectively.

Six other youth bowlers took part in the February roll-off—Ryan Gutierrez (623 pinfalls), Jamie Vales (601), Marion McKenzie (598), Zack Cruz (588), Nikko Gutierrez (505), and Troy Verdaguer (459).

All participants of the Bing Energy Drink Prince/Princess of the Lanes went home with giveaways courtesy of the sponsor, which is distributed exclusively by MARPAC.

Zapanta's older brother, Raymond, and mother, Gigi, also saw themselves leading their respective Budweiser King and Queen of the Lanes Tenpin Bowling Tournament after Day 1 of the competition Sunday.

Raymond currently enjoys a seven-pin lead over closest pursuer Jon Eparwa, 874-867, with Roger Vales in third place with 763 pinfalls.

Gigi, meanwhile, has 676 pinfalls to her name followed by Ron Cal's 676 and Gloria Omechalang's 651.

This is the first time bowlers from one family have won or are leading the monthly tournaments.

Results of Day 2 of the two-day King and Queen of the Lanes were still not available as of press time.

The Bing Energy Drink Prince/Princess of the Lanes as well as the Budweiser King and Queen of the Lanes are sponsored by MARPAC.

NMBF holds induction, victory party

CONTRIBUTEDPHOTO

Northern Marianas Badminton Federation officers, from left, secretary Hapi Gabriel, founder and former president Jonathan Perez, president Marconi Calindas, vice president Edwin Montoya, treasurer Malou Mendoza, auditor Cristy Villaflor, and public relations officer Macoi Aguda.

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

Northern Marianas Badminton Federation held its induction party for its new set of officers and victory party for the Top 3 teams in the Inaugural 2007 Mixed Team Tournament last year.

Traders Insurance topped the month-long tournament with SaipanCell/BME & Sons Construction placing second. L&M Enterprises/Tropex Garden United Colors of Badminton placed third.

NMBF officials also awarded plaques of appreciation to PTI, Traders Insurance, LabTech, Pure H20, Pacific Marine, Sun Palace, Shirley's Coffee Shop, Salon de Manila, Tan Holdings, SaipanCell, BME & Sons Construction, Tropex Garden, and L&M Enterprises.

The mixed team tournament was held in cooperation with Admaran International, Coral Ocean Point, Jollibee, Macatangay Dermhealth Saipan, Micronesian Brokers Inc., Truong's Vietnamese Restaurant, Vargas Construction, EI Freight Micronesia, Inc., Manic Inn, and Elite Printing.

Newly-inducted officers for 2008 were Marconi Calindas, president; Edwin Montoya, vice president; Happy Gabriel, secretary; Malou Mendoza, treasurer; Christy Villaflor, auditor; and Macoi Aguda, public relations officer.

NMBF founder and former president Jonathan Perez led the oath-taking ceremony, which was held from 6pm to 10pm at the Chambre Bar at the Fiesta Resort & Spa.

Special guest performers of the evening were Gabriel, Paul Dujua of the Fantasticks, and Pebbles Wong.

Reliance Construction, Traders Insurance, SaipanCell, LabTech, Makeover Beauty Salon, Trends Beauty Salon, Genoveva's Hair Power, Inc., Wear-a-Marconi, Apex Remittance, Vargas Construction, Cielo's Jewelry Creations, Pacific Trading Co., and ESolutions, Inc. donated raffle prizes that were given away during the awards ceremony.

Badminton Open every Saturday

The Northern Marianas Badminton Federation started a weekly mini-tournament to further hone the skills of their players and promote the sport locally.

Dubbed the Badminton Weekend Open, the games are being held every Saturday from 8am to 11am where players who want to join are paired up in a blind draw, knock-out match format.

NMBF decided to hold the weekly mini-tournament, which began last Feb. 9, for the spirit of fun and camaraderie. The events played are in men's, women's, and mixed doubles.

Last Saturday, the mixed doubles pair of Hapi Gabriel and Marlene Peraja defeated the duo of Diane Dar Juan and Lito Mendoza, 16-21, 21-18, 21-

See BADMINTON on Page 26

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Marlene Peraja and Hapi Gabriel hold their cash prizes after winning Saturday's NMBF Badminton Weekend Open Mixed Doubles, beating seven other pairs last Saturday at the Gilber C. Ada Gymnasium.

Tawanpiy triumphs in RGA February Ace

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSISTANT EDITOR

Asterio Tawanpiy successfully navigated the water hazards and sand traps of the Kingfisher Golf Links last Saturday to win the Refaluwasch Golf Association February Ace of the Month Tournament.

Tawanpiy, the son of Micronesia's master navigator, easily bested the qualifying net score of 67 posted by Ed "Doi" Tenorio a couple of weeks back in the Talafofo golf course by firing a net 65 last Feb. 16 to win the monthly championship.

He did it by shooting a 39-40 in the front and back nines to end up with a gross score of 79, which minus his 14 handicap, gave him the new score to beat in RGA's weekend competition.

Will Maui was two strokes back with his net 67, built around a 38 in the first nine holes and a 39 in the last nine for a gross score of 77. It was sliced to 67 by his 10 handicap.

In the battle for third, Joe Wabol edged RGA president Adam Hardwicke and John Mettao via scorecard tiebreak based on the front nine net.

Wabol finished with a 35 in the front nine, compared to Hardwicke's 35.5 and Mettao's 37.5. All three par-busters finished with identical 69s.

Twelve other golfers took part in the weekend tournament—Jess I. Wabol (net 71), Bae Yong Mon (72), Nick Sablan (72), Joe Lizama (75), Lou Tilipao (77), RGA 2007 Club Champion Andy Nepaial (78), James Choi (79), Jess K. Wabol (81), Jordan Kossam (82), Tenorio (82), Louis Byun (85), and Ed Kapileo (93).

In the closest to the pin competition, Tawanpiy ruled hole No. 6, while Joe Wabol was without peer in hole No. 15.

RGA also welcomed new members Kossam, Lizama, Choi, and Kapileo during the February Ace.

RGA president emeritus and current tournament director Jess I. Wabol also reminded the public that that the club has halved its membership dues for 2008 from the long-standing fee of $50 to only $25.

Jess I. Wabol said this happened after RGA recognized the hard economic times and decided to give its members and future members a break by slashing the cost of becoming part of RGA.

He hopes by making membership in RGA a little lighter in the pocket, more weekend warriors will now return to the golf links and renew their membership or apply as new members of the golf club.

Jess I. Wabol added that RGA is also instituting a new promotion this year wherein members who take part in at least 10 rounds by the time the annual RGA Turkey Shoot in November comes around, will get free entry into the tournament.

He said the club's March qualifier would be held on March 1, Saturday, at the Coral Ocean Point Golf Resort in Koblerville. Check-in time is 11am with tee off set an hour later at 12pm.

For more information about RGA's upcoming March Ace of the Month Qualifier, new membership policies, and other competitions held by the club, contact Hardwicke at 483-2926 or Jess I. Wabol at 233-3673.

Raphael razor-sharp in Bing Energy Drink bowling

Raphael Zapanta beat Mayanne McKenzie to win the first-ever Bing Energy Drink Prince/Princess of the Lanes Tenpin Bowling Tournament.

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Saipan Tribune
Sports

Allen leads East to All-Star win

Toss some leftover Mardi Gras beads toward the East. LeBron James and his crew earned them.

24

Heo rallies to beat Race

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

Ji Hoon Heo rallied back from three games down to beat former mentor Jeff Race, 9-7, in the men's singles finals of the 2008 Coconut Classic yesterday at American Memorial Park tennis courts.

Race turned back the hands of time when he led 6-3 and only needed two more games to wrap up the contest and get back at Heo, who beat him in the men's singles finals of the DFS Micronesian tennis tournament last year at Pacific Islands Club tennis courts.

Race played some of his best tennis against his former student, at times making shots as if he and Heo were on the same age group.

Heo, however, caught up with Race and won two hard-fought games to close in at 5-6. He tied the match at 6-6 winning the 12th game, with a 40-15 lead when Race's forehand return hit the net.

From there, momentum slowly shifted to Heo's side and he wrapped up the contest by winning three of the last two games.

Wind was also a huge factor in the game with several of Race's returns sailing way outside. "Wind was definitely a factor in the game. I had several shots that I miscalculated, I kept on looking for the wind direction to place my shots but it still sailed out," the former Pacific Oceania Davis Cup captain said.

It was the second straight match that Heo trailed and rallied back to win the game. He was down 0-3 to Nicolas Son in their semifinal match on Sunday when he also rallied and beat his doubles partner.

"I had almost no sleep for two days. I slept at least five hours at the most. We've been taking care of my mother who is sick right now," said Heo after the game.

Heo defeated Son, 8-5, to claim a spot in the finals. He earlier scored an 8-3 win over Sonny Decena, who was an 8-2 winner over Brian Hom. Son also defeated Hom, 8-0, to arrange a semifinal showdown with Heo.

Race, meanwhile, cruised to an 8-1 victory over Tomo Imazato in the other semis match to clinch the second finals berth. Race also defeated Keisuke Takaki, 8-4, while Imazato was fresh from an 8-2 crushing of Eric Abragan.

Other age division winners were Fernando Cajigan (men's Over-40); Mayuko Arriola (women's singles); Benjie Decena (boys' 18-and-under); Rafael Jones (boys' 13-and-under); Theecel Minor (girls' 13-and-under); Chris Cajigan (boys' 9-and-under); and first-timer Tammy Ackerman (girls' 9-and-under).

Fernando Cajigan defeated Michael Jang, 8-6, while Arriola outlasted Mailman, 9-7, in the women's singles with Thea Minor finishing in third place.

Thea's sister, Theecel, ruled the girls' 13-and-under division after an 8-2 crushing of Ilia Correla. Theecel trounced Neghar Rastguiy, 8-1, to arrange a finals showdown with Correla, who was an 8-3 winner over Amy Arenovski.

Benjie Decena defeated Russell Buenaventura to clinch the boys'

See HEO on Page 26

JON PEREZ
Ji Hoon Heo eyes the ball as he prepares to make a forehand return in his men's singles finals match against Jeff Race yesterday in the 2008 Coconut Classic at American Memorial Park tennis courts.

Australia trip nets SSC 12 medals

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
From left, Abigail Martinsen, Junior Pamaran, Lester Lapuz, Blair Nichols, Michael Moran Jr., Cooper Graf, Victoria Chentsova, and Sarah Johnson pose for a photo at the Cairns airport before flying home to the CNMI.

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSISTANT EDITOR

Led by the indomitable Cooper Graf, the eight-person Saipan Swim Club team to the Far North Queensland Long Course Swimming Championships returned from Cairns, Australia with 12 medals.

Fifteen-year-old Graf paced SSC's success in the Land Down Under with

See AUSTRALIA on Page 26

Ol'Aces edge Lion Hearts in Junior League

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

The UMDA-Ol'Aces used a four-run sixth inning then handed the game to closer Kevin Yamada in the top of the seventh to score a 12-11 win over the Kagman Lion Hearts in the Junior League division.

Jesse Yamagishi highlighted that four-run six-inning explosion.

The Ol'Aces-Lion Hearts match was the final game played on Sunday at the Francisco M. Palacios Baseball Field after the Saipan Little League opened up its 2008 season last Saturday.

Ol'Aces started the match with an 8-2 lead after two complete innings, but allowed the Lion Hearts to move within 7-8 after Kagman pitchers Richard Dela Cruz and Ricardo Dela Cruz shut them out for three straight innings.

Yamagishi went 3-for-4 with a single and a triple to go with his leadoff solo home run in the sixth.

A.J. Taitano lasted four innings on the mound for Ol'Aces as he held the Kagman nine to five runs on four hits with four strikeouts and five walks.

See OL'ACES on Page 26

Palacios outlasts Charley in 'The Uproar"

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

First of two-part series

Badd" Brad Palacios defeated Matai Charley in what could have been one of the greatest mixed martial arts fights in Rites of Passage history.

Palacios defeated Charley via majority decision in the main event of Saturday's Rites of Passage IV: The Uproar held at the Trench Tech Purebred Saipan Gym behind Moylan's Insurance in Garapan.

Charley was a last-minute replacement in the main event match against Palacios. Palacios was supposed to face freestyle fighter Martin Ayuyu, but the latter got injured while training for the fight.

Palacios and Charley did not disappoint the capacity crowd that trooped to Trench Tech gym to watch two of the best up-and-com-

See PALACIOS on Page 26

Matai Charley, bottom, tries to block a punch by "Badd" Brad Palacios in their main event match in Rites of Passage IV: The Uproar last Saturday at the Trench Tech Purebred Gym.

JON PEREZ